¶ Rete thankes laude and honoure ought to be ye
gyuen vnto the clerkes poetes and historiagraphs
that haue writen many noble bokes of wisdom
of the lyues passions and miracles of holy seyn
tes of hystories of noble and famous actes & faittes. And
of the cronicles sithen the begynnyng of the creacioun of
the worlde vnto this present tyme. by whiche we ben dai
ly enfourmed and haue knowlege of manye thynges. of
whom we shuld nat haue knowen yf they had nat left to
vs theire monimentes writen. ¶ mong whom and in
special to fore alle other we ought to gyue a singuler lau
de vnto that noble and grete philosopher Geffrey chaucer
the whiche for his ornate writing in oure tonge may wel
haue the name of a laureate poete. For to fore tha. he by
his labour enbelisshid ornatid and made faire our englis
she in this Realme was hadde rude speche & incongrue as
yet it appereithe by olde bokes. Whiche at this daie ought
nat to haue place ne be compared emong his beautevous
volumes & ornate writinges Of whom he made many a
noble historye as well in metre as in ryme and prose and
them so craftely made that he comprehended his maters.
in short quiche and high sentences eschewing prolixite &
casting away the chaf and superfluite & shewing the pyth
ed grayne of sentence vttered by crafty & fugred eloquen
ce Of whom I among alle other of his bokes the boke of
the tales of Canterburie in whiche ben many a noble hi
storie of wisdome policie mirth and gentilnes. And also
of vertue and holynes Whiche boke diligently ouirsen &
duely examined by the politike reason and ouirsight. of
my worshipful maister William Caxton accordinge to the
entent and effecte of the seid Geffrey Chaucer and by a
copy of the seid maister Caxton purpos to imprent. by ye
grace ayde and supposte of almighty god. whom I hum-

ly beseche. that he of his grete and habundant grace wil so dispose that I may it fynisshe to his plesure laude and glorye. And that alle we that shalle therin se or rede may so take & vnderstond the gode and vertuous tales that it may so profitte to the helth of oure soules. and in especial of the soule of the seid Geffrey chaucer. first autour & maker of this forseid boke. that after this short and transitorye lyfe we may cõme to the euirlastinglyf in heuynne Amen.

By Richard Pynson.



Hay that Aprille with his showres sote
W The drought of marche hath perced the rote
And bathed euery veyne in such licoure
Of which vertue engendred is the flour
Whanne zephirus eke with his sote breth
Enspired hath in euery holte and heth
The tendre croppes and the yonge sonne
Hathe in the ram halfe his cours yronne
And smale foules make melodye
That slepyn al nyght with open eye
So priketh hem nature in their corages
Than longen folke to goon on pilgramages
And palmers to seche straunge strondes
To seruen halowes couthe in sondry londes
And specially fro euery shires ende
Of englond to Caunterbury they wende
The holy blisful martir for to seke
That hem hath holpyn whan they were seke
yfel in that season on a day
B In southwerke at the tabarde as I lay
Redy to wenden on my pylgramage
To caunterbury with deuoute corage
That nyght came into that hostelrye
Wel nyne and twenty in a company
Of sondry folk by auenture yfalle
In felauship and pilgrames were they alle
That toward caunterbury wolden ryde
The chambres and the stables were wyde
And wel were we eased at the best
And shortly whan the sonne was at rest
So hadde I spoken with hem euirichone
That I was of their felauship anone
And made forward erly for to ryse

To take oure wey there as ſ̄ you deuyſe
But neuirtheles whiles ſ̄ haue tyme and ſpace
Or that ſ̄ ferther in this take pace
Me thinketh it accordant to reaſon
To telle you al the condicion
Of eche of theym ſo as it ſemed me
And whiche they were and of what degre
And in what aray eche they were ynne
And at a knyght thenne ſ̄ wille begynne



a knyght there was a worthy man
That fro the tyme that he firſt began
To ryden oute . he loued chyualrye
Trouthe and honoure fredom and curteſye
Ful worthy he was in his lordes werre
And therto hadde he ryden no man ferre
And ayſwele in criſtendome as in hethneſſe
And euer hadde honoure for his worthyneſſe
At alyſaundre he was whan it was wonne

Fulle ofte tyme he hadde the boorde begonne
Aboue alle nations in price
In lettowe hadde he reyſed and in Ruſe
In garnade at the ſege eche hadde he be
At algezir and ryden in Belmarye
At leyeys Was he and eke at Satalye
Whan they Were wonne and in the grete ſee
At many a noble arme hadde he be
At mortayl batailles hadde he be fyftene
And foughe for oure feyth at Trampſſene
In liſtes thryes and ay ſlayn his foo
This ylke Worthy knyght hadde be alſo
Som tyme With the lorde of palatye
Agayn a nother hethen may in Turkye
And euermore he hadde a ſouerayn price
And though he Was Worthy he Was Wiſe
And of his ſporte as meke as a mayde
He neuer yete no vilanye he ſaid
In alle his lyf vnto no maner Wight
He Was a verey gentyl parfite knyght
For to telle you of his arraye
His horſe Were good but he Was nat gaye
Of fuſtian he Wered a gypponn
Alle be ſmered With his habergeon
For he Was late come fro his vyage
And ſent for to do his pilgramage.



ꝑth him there was his sonne a yong squyer
b A louer and a lusty bachelor
With lokes crulle as they were leyde in presse
Of twenty yere of age he was ꝑ gesse
Of his stature he was of euene lenghte
And wonderly delyuer and of grete strenghte
And he hadde be somtyme in chyuauchye
In flaundres. in Artoys and in ꝑcardye
And borne him wele as of a lytel space
In hope to stonden in his ladies grace
Enbrowded was he as it were a mede
Alle fulle of fresshe floures white and rede
Syngynge he was or floytynge alle the daie
He was as freshe as is the moneth of maye
Short was his gowne with sleuys long and wyde
Wele coude he sitte on hors and therto faire ryde
He coude songes make and wele endite
Jouste and daunce portraye and eke write

So hote he loued that by nyghtes tale
He slepte nomore than the nyghtingale
Curteys he was lowly and seruysable
He carft before his fadre at the table



yemanhadde he and seruauntes nomo
At that tyme for he lyst to ryde soo
And he was cladde in cote and hode of grene
A sheef of pecok arowes bryght and shene
Vndre his belt he bare ful thryftely
Wele coude he dresse his takyl yomanly
His arowes drouped nat with fethers lowe
And in his hond he bare a mighty bowe
A not hede he hadde with a broune visage
Of wodemannes craft coude he alle the vsage
Vpon his arme he bare a gay bracer
And by his syde a swerde and a bokeler
And on that other side a gay dagger
Harneised wele and sharp as poynte of spere

A cristofer on his brest of syluer shene
An horne he baar the bawdryk was of grene
A foster was he sothly as I gesse



Her was also a nonne a prioresse
That of her smylyng was symple and coy
Her gretest othe was by seint loy
And she was clepyd dame Eglentyn
Full wele she sorge the seruice dyuine
Entoyned in her nose full semely
And frenche she spake full fetously
After the scole of stratford at the bowe
For frenshe of Parice was to her vnknowe
At mete wele taught was she with alle
She lete no morsel fro her lyppes falle
Ne wette her fyngers in her sauce depe
Wele conde she carye a morselle of mete
That no drope fil vpon her breest

Hy curteysee was sette fulle mekyl hezlest
Hez ouezlippe wiped she so clene
That in hez cuppe thez was no ferthing sene
Of grece. whan she hadde dronke hez draught
Fulle semely after hez mete she raught
And sekirly she was of grete disporte
Of plesaunce and amyable of porte
And peyned hez to countrefete chere
Of courte and to be stately of manere
And to be holde digne of reuerence
But for to speke of hez conscience
She was so charitable and so pyteous
She wolde wepe if that she sawe a mouse
Naught in trappe if it were dede or bledde
Of smale houndes hadde she that she fedde
With rooste flesshe or mylke or wastel brede
But sore wept she if any of theym were dede
Or if men smote theym with yerde smert
And alle was conscience and tendre hezte
Fulle semely hez wympyl ypyched was
Hez nose tretise hez eyen grey as glas
Hez mouth smal and therto soft and rede
But sykerly she hadde a faire forehede
It was almost a spanne brode I trowe
For hardily she was nat vnder growe
Fulle fetyce was hez cloke as I was waar
Of smalle coralle aboute hez arme she bare
A peyre of bedes gauded alle with grene
And there on heng a broche fulle shene
On whiche firste was writte a crowned A
And after that Amor vincit omnia
Another nonne with hez hath she
That was hez chapeleyn and yrestes thre



Monke ther was fayr for the maistre
a An oute ryder that loued wele venorye
A manly man to be an abbote able
Fulle many a deynte horse hadde he in stable
And when he rode men myght his bridel here
Gyngling and whistlyng in the winde clere
And ere as lowde as doth the chapel belle
There as this lorde was kepar of the celle
The reule of seint Maure and of seint Benet
Bicause he held it somwhat olde and streyte
This ilke monke lete olde thinges pace
And helde after the new worlde the space
He yaf nat of the texte a pulked hennе
That seyth that hunters be nat holy men
Ne that a monke when he is recheleſſe
Is lyke to a fiſſhe when it is waterleſſe
This is to sey a monke oute of a cloyſtre

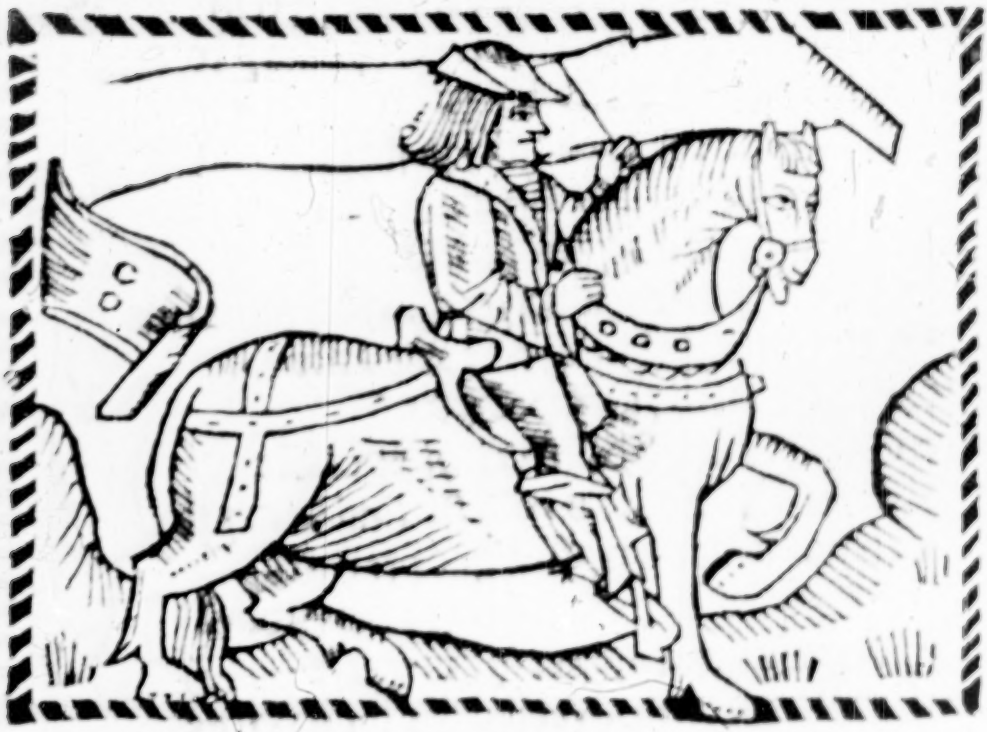
But that texte helde he nat worth an oyster
And I sey that his opunyon was gode
What shulde he studye and make him wode
Upon a boke alwey in cloyster to poure
Or swynke with his hondes and laboure
As austyn bidde how shulde the worlde be serued
Let austyn haue his swynke to him reserued
Therfore he was a pryckasour a right
Grehoundes he hadde as swift as foule on flight
Of pryking and of huntyng for the hare
Was alle his lust for no cost wolde he spare
I saw his sleues purfyled at the honde
With grice and that the fynest of a londe
And to fasten his hode vnder the chynne
He hadde of golde wrought a curyous pynne
A loue knotte in the gretter ende there was
His hede was balled which shone as glas
And eke his face as he hadde been anoynte
He was a lorde fatte and in gode poynte
His eyen steep and rollyng in his hede
That stemyd as a furneys of a lede
His botes souple his hors in grete estate
Now certeynly he was a fayre prelate
He was nat pale as a forpyned goost
A fat swan loued he best of any roste
His palfrey was as broune as a berye



Frere ther was a wanton and a merey
A limptoure and a full solemne may
In alle the ordres foure is none that can
Somoche of dalyaunce and faire langage
He hadde made full many a faire mariage
Of yonge wymmen at his owen cost
Unto his ordre he was a noble post
Full wel beloued and full famyliar was he
With frankeleyns ouer al in his contre
And eke with worthy wemen of the towne
For he hadde power of confessioun
And seid him self more than a curate
And of his ordre he was licenciat
Full swetely herd he confessioun
And plesaunt with his absolucioun
And an easy man to yyue penaunce
There he wiste to haue yode pitaunce

For vnto a poure ordure for to gyue
Is sygne that a man is wele y shryue
For if he yaf he durst wele make a vaunt
He wist that a man was repentaunt
Many a man so hard is of herte
He may nat wepe thoughe he sore smerte
Therfore in stede of weppyng and prayers
Men moste yeue siluer to the poure freres
His tepat was y farsed ful of knyues
And with pynnes to gyue faire wyues
And certeyne he hadde a merry note
Wery coude he syng and play at the rote
Of yeddinges he bare vttery the price
His necke was white as the floure delice
Therto stronge he was as a champyoun
And knewe the tauernes wele in euery towne
And euery ostelere and tapstere
Better than a lazar or a beggestere
For vnto suche a worthy man as he
Accordeth nat as by his faculte
To haue of suche sike lazers acqueyntaunce
It is nat honest it may nat auaunce
For to dele with suche poraille
But with riche and sellers of vytaille
And ouer alle there as richesse shulde aryse
Curteys he was and lowly of seruice
Ther was no man no where so vertuous
He was the best beggar in his house
And yaue a certeyne ferme for the graunt
Noon of his brethern cam in his haunt
For thoughe a widowe hadde nat a shoo
So plesaunt was his in principio
yet wolde he haue a ferthing or he went

His purchace was better than his rent
And berbe he colde as it weze a whelpe
In loue daies there coude he metel helpe
For there he nas lyke a cloyster
With a thredebare cope as a poure frere
But he was lyke a maister or a pope
Of double worstede was his semy cope
That rounde was as a belle out of presse
Some what he lispedfor his wantownesse
To make his englisshe swete vpon his tonge
And his harpyng when he hadde y sunge
His eyen twenkled in his hede a right
As doon the sterres in the frosty nyght
This worthy frere was callid Huberd



A Marchant there was with a forked berd
In motley on his horse high he sat
Vpon his hede a flaundres beuer hat

His botes claspid feyre and fetously
His reasons he spack full solempnely
Shewing alwey the encresse of his wynyng
He wolde the see were kepte for any thinge
Betwixte Middelburgh and ore Wesse
Wele cowde he in his eschaunge sesse
This worthy man his witte ful wele besette
Ther wist no wight that he was in dette
So estately he was of gouernaunce
With his bargaynes and with his cheuesaunce
For sothe he was a worthy man with alle
But sothe to say I not how men him calle



Clerke ther was of Oyenforde also
a That vnto logik had longe y go
And lene was his horse as a rake
And he was nat right fat I vndertake
But lokid holowe and therto sobirly
Ful thredebare was his ouereste courtby

For he hadde goten hym yet no benefice
Ne was nat worldly to haue any office
For he hadde leuer to haue at his beddys hede
Twenty bokes clad in blak and rede
Of aristotle and of his philosophie
Than robes riche or fedyl or sawtre.
But alle be that he was a philosophre
yet hadde he but lytel golde in cofre
But alle that he might of his frendes hent
On bokes and on lernyng he it spent
And besily gan for the soules praye
Of them that yaue hym wherwithe to scolaye
Of studye tooke he moost cure and hede
Nat a worde spake he more than nede
And that was seyde in fourme and reuerence
Shorte and quike and ful of high sentence
Sownyng moral vertue was his speche
And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche



Sergeaunt of lawe waar and wise
a Was there that ofte hadde be at the paruise
That was also fulle riche of excellence
Discrete he was and of grete reuerence
He semyd suche his wordes were so wise
Justice he was ful ofte in assise
By patent and by playn cõmyssioun
For his science and his high renoun
Of fees and robes had he many one
So grete a purchasour was there nowhere none
Al was fee symple to him in effecte
His purchace might nat be to him suspecte
No where so besy a man as he there nas
And yet he semed besyer than he was
In termes had he caas and domes alle
That fro the tyme of kyng William were falle
Therto he coude endite and make a thing
Ther coude no wight pynche at his writing
And euery statute coude he pleyn by rote
He rode but homely in a medel cote
Gyrthed with a seynt of silke with barres smale
Of his aray telle I no lenger tale



Frankleyn Was in his companye
a White Was his berd as is the deysie
And of his complexioun Was sangwyn
Wele loued he by the morowe a cuppe of wyn
To lyue in delite Was euer his wone
For he Was epycuries owen sone
That held opunyon that pleyn delite
Was verray felicite parfite
An housholder and that a grete Was he
Seint Julian he Was in his contre
His breed his ale Was alwey after one
A better wiued man Was nō where none
Withoute bake mete Was he neuer in house
His fisshe his flesshe and that so plenteuous
It snewed in his house of mete and drinke
Of alle dentees that men coude thinke
After the sondry seasons of the yere
So chaunged he his mete and his soupere
Full many a fatte partriche hadde he in mewe
And many a breme and luce in stewe
Woo Was his coke but his sawce Were
Poynaunt and sharp and redy alle his gere
His table dormaunt in his halle alwey
Was redy couered alle the longe daye
At sessions there Was he lord and sire
Full oft tyme he Was knyght of the shire
An anlace and a gypser al of silke
Hing at his girdel as White as morowe mylke
A shereue hadde he be and coronoure
Was nowhere suche a worthy vauasoure



A haberdasshe⁊ the⁊ was and a carpenters
A webbe a dye⁊ and a tappyse⁊
And they were clothed alle in one lyuere
Of a solempne and grete fraternyte
Fulle freshe and new their gere pyhed was
Their knyues chaped were nat with brasse
But al with silue⁊ wrought fulle clene and wele
Their girdeles and their pouches euery dele
Wele semed ethe of theym a faire burgees
To sitten in the yelde halle at the dese
Euerich for the wisdome that he can
Was happely for to be an alderman
For catel hadde they ynow and rent
And their wyues wolde it wele assent
And elles certeyn they were to blame
It is fulle faire to be called Madame
And go to the vigylles alle biforе
And haue a mantel rialy y boze



Cohe they hadde with theym for the nones
a To boyle the chekyns and the mary bones
And poudre marchaunt tart and galingale
Wele knewe he a draught of london ale
He coude roost sethe broyle and frye
Make mortrewes and wele bake a pye
But grete harme was it as it thought me
For on his shynne a mormale hadde he
And blanke mangez made he with the beste



Shipman was there that woned far by weſt
a For ought I wote he was of dertmouth
He rode vpon a rounce as he couth
In a gowne folding to the knee
A dagger on a lace hanging hadde he
Aboute his necke vnder his arme adowne
The hote ſomer hadde made his hewe alle browne
And certeynly he was a gode felawe
Fulle many a draught of wyne he hadde drawe
Fro burdeux warde whyle the chapman ſlepe
Of nyce conſcience toke he no kepe
If that he faught and hadde the hyghere honde
By watere he ſent them home to euery londe
But of his craft to reken well his tydes
His ſtremes and his daungers him beſides
His herberuth his moone and his lodemanage
There was none ſuche from hulle to Cartage
Hardy he was and wiſe to vndertake
With many a tempeſt his berde hath ben ſhake

He knewalle the hauenes that there were
Fro gotelond vnto Capfenestre
And euery crythe in britayn and in spayne
His barge was called the Maudeleyne



With vs ther was a doctoure of phisyke
In the worlde was ther nonehym lyke
To speke of physike and surgery
For he was grounded in astronomye
He kept his pacient a grete dele
In houres by magyke naturelle
Wele coude he of fortune the ascendent
Of his ymages for his pacient
He knewe the cause of euery maladye
Were it of colde hete moyst or drye
And were engendred of what humoure
He was a verry parfite practesoure
The cause y knowe and of his harme the rote
Anone he yaf to the seke man his bote
For redy alwey he his apotecaries

To ſend him drugges and his lectuaries
For eche of them made other for to wynne
Their frendeſhip was nat newe to begynne
Full wele kneweth the olde Eſculapius
And diſcorydes and eke Rufus
Olde ypocras. haly. and eke Galiene
Serapion. Raſis. and eke Auicene
Auerroys damaſcene and conſtantyn
Bernarde Gatiſden and Gilbertyn
Of his dyete meſurable was he
For it was of no ſuperfluite
But of grete noryſſhing and deſtyble
His ſtodye was but lytel on the byble
In ſanguyn and in perce ycladde with alle
Lyned with taffata and with ſandalle
And lytelle he was of his diſpence
He kept that he wan in the peſtilence
For golde in phyſike is a cordialle
Therfore he loued golde in eſpecialle



Gode wif thez was of beſyde bathe
a And ſhe was ſomedele deef & that was ſcathe
Of clothe makyng hadde ſhe ſuche an haunt
She paſſed theym of ypre and of gaunt
In alle the pariſſhe wif was there none
That to the offrynge bifore hez ſhulde gone
And if thez dyd certeyn wrothe was ſhe
Thay was ſhe oute o ſalle charyte
Hez kercheues were fulle fyne of grounde
I durſt ſwere they weyed thre pounde
That on ſonday were on hez hede
Hez hoſen were of fyne ſcarlet rede
Ful ſtreyte y teyde and ſhoos ful moyſt and newe
Bolde was hez face faire and rede of hewe
She was a worthy woman alle hez lyue
Huſbondes at the chirche doze hadde ſhe fyue
Withoute othez company in youthe
But therof nedith nat to ſpeke as nowthe
At acres hadde ſhe been and at Jheruſalem
She had paſſed through many a ſtraunge reame
At Rome ſhe hadde be and boloyne
At ſeynt James in Galis and at Coloyne
She coude moche of wandring in the wey
Gap tothed was ſhe ſothly to ſey
Vpon an ambulez ful eaſily ſhe ſatte
y wympled wele and on hez hede an hatte
As brode as it were a bokelez oz a targe
A fote mantel aboute hez hippes large
And on hez heles a peire of ſpozes ſharpe
Jnſ ela wſhip coude ſhe la whe and carpe
Of remedyes of loue ſhe coude paz chaunce
Foz of that arte ſhe coude the olde daunce



Gode man thez Was of religiou
a And Was a poure parſon of a toWne
But riche he Was of holy thought and Werke
He Was alſo a lerned man a clerke
That criſtes goſpelles truly Wolde preche
His pariſſhons deuoutly Wolde he teche
Benygne he Was and Wondre diligent
And in aduerſite fulle pacient
And ſuche he Was proued ofte ſithes
Fulle lothe Were he to curſe foz his tithes
But rathez Wolde he yeue oute of doute
Vnto his poure pariſſhons aboute
Of his offrynge and eke of his ſubſtaunce
He cowde in lytel thinge haue ſuffiſaunce
Wyde Was his paryſſhe and houſes fez a ſondre
But he lete nat foz rayne ne foz thundre
In ſekeneſſe nez in myſcheyf to viſite
The ferzeſt in his paryſſhe moze and lyte
Vpon his feete and in his honde a ſtaf

This noble ensample vnto his shepe he yaue
That first he wrought and after warde he taught
Oute of the gospelle the wordes he caught
And this figure he added therto
That if golde rust what shulde iron doo
For a preest to be foule in whom we truste
No wondre is a lewde man to ruste
And shame it is if a preest take kepe
A slotty shepeherd and a clene shepe
Wele ought a preest ensample to yyue
By his cleenesse how his shepe shold lyue
Besette nat his benefice to hyre
And lete his shepe acombre in the myre
And renne to london to seynt poules
And selle him a chauntrye for soules
Or there with a broderhode to be withholde
But dwelle at home and kepe his folde
So that the wolf ne made it nat myscarye
He was a shepeherde and nat a mercenarye
And thoughe he holy were and vertuous
He was nat to synfulmen to dispiteous
Ne of his speeche daungerous ne digne
But in his techyng discrete and benigne
To drawe folke to heuyn with fairnesse
By good ensample that was his bisynesse
But it were any parsone obstynate
What so he were of high or lowe estate
Him wolde he snybbe sharply for the nones
A bettre preest I trowe nowhere none is
He wayted after no pompe ne reuerence
Ne made to him a spyced conscience
But cristes lore and his apostles twelue
He taught but first he folowed himself



Wth him ther was a ple we man his brode
W That hadde led of dung many a fothe
A trew swynker and a gode was he
Louyng ly pease and parfite charite
God loued he best With alle his hert
At alle tymes though he gamed or smert
And thay his nyghboure right as him selue
He wo.de thresshe and therto digge and delue
For cristes sake for euery poure Wight
Without hyre if it ley in his mygh
His tythes paide he faire and Wele
Of his propre swynke and his catele
In a taberd he rode vpon a mere
There was also a reue and eke a millere
A sompnour and a pardonere also
A manciple and my selue there was no moo



The myller was a stoute carle for the nones
Full byg he was of braun and bones
That proued wele for ouer alle there he cam
At wrastling alwey he wolde haue the ram
He was short shuldred brode a thicke quarze
There was no doze that he nolde heue of the barre
Or breke it at rennynge with his hede
His berd as any sowe or fox was rede
And therto brode as it were a spade
Upon the cop right of his nose he hadde
A werte. and there on stode a tufte of heres
Rede as the brusteles of a sowes erres
His nosetrilles blake were and wide
A swerde and a bokeler bare he by his side
His mouth as grete was as a furneys
He was a Jangler and a goliardeys
And that was mooste of synne and harlotries
Wele coude he stele corne and telle thries
And that he hadde a thombe of golde parde

A White cote and a ble we hode were he
A bagge pype coude he blowe and sowne
And therwith he brought vs oute of towne



Gentyl manciple was ther of the temple
a Of whiche a catoure might take exemple
For to be wise in byyng of vitaille
For whether he paied or tolde by taille
Algate he waited so cy his achate
That he was ay bifore and in gode state
Nowe is nat that of god a faire grace
That suche a lewed mannes witte shalle pace
The wisdome of an hepe of lernyd men
Of maisters hadde he mo than thries ten
That were of lawe experte and cosious
Of whiche there were a dosen in that house
Worthy to be stewardes of rent and londe
Of any lorde that is in Englond
To make him lyue by his owen good
In honoure detles but he were wode

Wher lyue ſcarſely as theym liſte deſire
And able for to helpe alle the ſhire
In any cauſe that might falle or happe
And yet this manciple ſet alle their cappe



Rene ther was a ſlendre colerike man
His berde is ſhaue as nygh as he can
His heres were by his eres rounde y ſhore
His top was docked like a preeſt bifore
Full lene were his legges and full lene
Lyke a ſtaf ther is no calf y ſene
Wele coude he kepe a garner and a bynne
Ther was none auditoure coude of him wynne
Wele wiſt he by the drought and by the rayn
The yelding of his ſede and of his greyn
His lordes ſhepe his nete and his deyre
His ſwyne his horſe his ſtore and his pultre
Was holy in this reuys gouernyng
And by his couenaunt yaue the rekenyng

Sith his lorde was twenty yere of age
Ther coude no man bronge him in arerage
There nas Baillie ne none other hyne
That he ne knewe his slight oh his couyne
They weze of him a drad as of the deth
His wonyng was ful faire vpon a heth
With grene trees shadowed was his place
He coude better than his lorde purchase
Full riche he was astored pryuely
His lord wele coude he plese subtelly
To yeue and lene to him of his owyn good
And haue thanke and yete a cote and a hode
In youth he hadde lernyd a good mystere
He was a were gode Wright a Carpentere
This reue sat vpon a wele gode stot
That was a pomely grey and hight scot
A long surcote of perce vpon him he hadde
And by his side he bare a rusty bladde
Of nozfolke was this reue of which I telle
Beside a towne men calle Bladswelle
Tukked he was as is a frere aboute
And euir he rode the hyndrest of the route



Somnoure with vs was in that place
a That hadde a fyre rede cherubyns face
For sasfleme he was with eyen narow
Hote he was and liherous as a sparow
With blak browes shaklid and pilled berd
Of his visage children were a ferd
Ther nas quyk siluer litarge ne brymstone
Borace ceruse ne oyle of tartre none
Ne oynement that wolde clense ne bite
That him might helpe of his welkes white
Ne of his knobbes sitting on his chekes
Wele loued he oynons garlek and lekes
And for to drinke strong wyne as rede as blode
Than wold he spek and cry as he were wood
And when he hadde wele dronke the wyne
Than wolde he spek no worde but latyn
A fewe termes hadde he two or thre
That he hadde lernyd of sum man of decre
No wondre is he herde it alle the daye
And eke ye knowe wele that a Jay
Can clepe watte as wele as can the pope
But who coude him in othir thinges grope
Than hadde he spent alle his philosophye
Ay questio quid queris wolde he cry
He was a gentyl harlote and kynde
A better felaw sholde men nat fynde
He wolde suffre for a quarte of wyn
A gode felowe to haue his concubyn
A twelf moneth and excuse him at the fulle
Fulle pryuely a fynche eke coude he pulle
And if he fonde owhere a good felawe
He wolde teche him anone to haue awe
In suche caas of the archedekyns curse

But if mannes ſoule were in his purſe
For in his purſe he ſholde punyſſhed be
Purſe is the archedeknes helle ſaide he
But wele I woote he lied right in dede
Of curſynge ought eche man to drede
For curſynge wille ſle right as ſoplinge ſaueth
And alſo ware him of a ſignificauit
In daunger hadde he at his owyn guyſe
Alle the yonge gyrles of the diocyſe
And knewe of theire counſeyl and was of theire rede
A garlonde he hadde ſette vpon his hede
As grete as it were an ale ſtake
A bokeler hadde he made him of a cake



Wyth theym there rode a gentil pardoner
Of rouncyuale his frende and his compere
That ſtreight was come fro the courte of Rome
Full loude he ſonge come hyther loue to me
This ſompnoure bare to him a ſtyf burdoun
Was neuer trompe of half ſo grete a ſowne

This pardoner had here as yelow as wey
And smoth it heng as doth a strype of fley
By lounses heng his lockes that he hadde
And therwith his shulders ouer spradde
But thayr it ley by culpons one and oon
Ayr hode for Jolyte wered he none
For it was trussed vpon his walette
Him thought he rode vpon a new get
Dissheuyld saue his cappe he rode alle bare
Suche glarynge eyen had he as hathe any hare
A vernacle hadde he sowed vpon his cappe
His walet bifore him hadde he in his lappe
Bretfulle of pardon come fro Rome alle hote
A voyce he hadde as smalle as hath a gote
No berde hadde he ne neuer shuld haue
As smothe was it as it were new shaue
I trowe he were a gelding or a mare
But of his craft from Berwyke vnto ware
Ne was ther nowhere suche a pardoner
For in his male he hadde a pylowe beer
Which that he seid was oure ladyes veyle
He said he hadde a gobbet of the seyle
That seynt Peyr hadde whan that he went
Vpon the see tyl Jesus crist him hent
He hadde a crosse of laton fulle of stones
And in a glasse he hadde pigges bones
But with these reliques whan that he fonde
A poure parson dwellyng vpon londe
Vpon a daye he gat him more money
Than the parson gat in monethes twey
And thus hadde he flateries and iapes
He made the parson and the peple his apes
But truly to telle at the last

He was in chirche a noble eccle ſiaſte
Wele cowde he rede a leſſon or a ſtorye
But altherbeſt he ſonge an offre torye
For wele he wiſt whan that ſonge was ſunge
He muſt preche and ſyle a while his tunge
To wynne ſiluer as he fulle wele coude
Therfore he ſonge the merierly and loude
Now haue I tolde you ſhortely in a clauſe
The ſtate the arraye the nombre & the cauſe
Why that aſſembled was this company
In Southwerke at the gentil hoſterye
That highte the Taberde faſt by the Belle
But nowis tyme to you for to telle
How that we bare vs that ilke nyght
When that we were in the hoſtrye a light
And after wille I telle of oure viage
And alle the remenaunt of oure pilgramage
But firſt I you pray of youre curteſye
That ye arette nat my vilonye
Though that I playnly ſpeke in this matere
To telle you their wordes and their chere
And though I ſpeke their wordes properly
For this ye knowe aſwele as I
Who ſhal a tale telle after a man
He muſt reherſe as nere as he can
Euery worde if it be in his charge
Al ſpeke he neuer ſo rudely and ſo large
Or elles he muſt telle his tale vntrewe
Or feyne thinges or feyne wordes newe
He may nat ſpare al though he were his broder
He moot aſwele ſay o worde as a nother
Criſt ſpake him ſelue ful brode in holy writte
And wele ye wote no vilany is it

The plato seyeth Who can it rede
The worde must be cosyn to the dede
Also I praye you forgeue it me
Al though I set nat folk in their degre
Here in these tales as they shulde stonde
My witte is shorte ye may wele vndrestonde



Rete chere made oure ost to vs eurichone
¶ And to the soupere sette he vs anone
He serued vs with vitaylle at the best
Stronge was the wyne and wele drinke vs lyst
A semely man oure ost was with alle
For to be a marshalle in a lordes halle
A large man he was with eyen stepe
A fayrer burgges is ther none in chepe
Bolde of his spechе and wele was y taught
And of manhode lacked he right naught
Eke therto was he right a mery man
And after souper to pleyen he began
And spake of mirth amonge othe r thinges

Whan that we hadde made oure reknynges
He ſayd thus lordynges truly
ye be to me right welcom hertly
For by my trewth if I ſhalle nat lye
I ſawe nat this yere ſo merry a company
At onys in this herborow as now
ſeyne wolde I do you myrth if I wiſt how
And of a myrth I am right now bethought
To do you eaſe and it ſhal coſt you nought
ye go to Caunterbury warde god you ſpede
The bliſful martyr quyte you your mede
And wele ye wote as ye go by the wey
ye ſhapyn you to talke and to pley
For truly comfort ne myrth is none
To ryde by the wey dombe as a ſtone
And therfore wille I make you diſporte
As I ſaid erſt and do you comforte
And it lyketh you alle by one aſſent
For to ſtonde at my iugement
And for to werke as I ſhalle you ſay
To morow whan ye rydey on the way
Now by my fadre ſoule that is dede
But ye be merry I ſhalle geue you my hede
Holde vp your hond without more ſpeche
Our counſel ſhal nat long be to ſeche
Vs thought it was nat worth to make vs wys
And graunted him without more a vys
And badde him ſey his verdite as him liſt
Lordinges quod he now herkneth for the beſt
But take it nat I praye you in diſdeyn
This is the poynte to ſpeke it ſhorte and pleyn
That eche of you to ſhorte with your wey
In this viage ſhalle tel tales twey

To Caunterbury warde I mene it so
And homwarde he shal telle other tales two
Of auentures that whilom haue befalle
And whiche of you berith him best of alle
That is to say that telleth in this caas
Tales of the best sentence and moost solace
Shalle haue a souper of our alther cost
Here in this place sittyng by the post
Whan that we com ayen from Caunterbury
And for to make you the more mery
I wille my selue godely with you ryde
Right at myn owen cost and be your gyde
And who that wol my iugement withsay
Shortely shal paye alle that is spent by the wey
And if he vouchsauf that it be so
Telle me anone withoute wordes mo
And I wille arly shape me therfore
This thing was graunted and othes swore
With full glad herte and prayen him also
That he wolde vouchesauf that it be so
And that he wolde be our gouernour
And of our tales iuge and reportour
And sette a souper at a certayn pryce
And wolde be ruled at his deuyce
Bigh and lowe and alle by one assent
We be accorded to this iugement
And ther vpon the wyne was sette anone
We dranke and to rest went we echone
Withoute any lenger taryyng
A morowe when the day gan spryng
Vp rose our hoost and was alle our cok
And gadred vs to gidre alle in a flok
And forth we ryden litel more than paas

Vnto the Watering of ſent Thomas
And there our hoſt gan his horſe areſt
And ſaid herkeneth lordingis if ye liſt
ye woot oure forwarde and I you recorde
yf eu yn ſong and moroſonge accorde
Let ſe now who ſhal telle the firſt tale
As euir mot I drinke wyne or ale
Who ſo wil be rebelle to my iugement
Shal pay for alle that is by the wey ſpent
Now draw cut or that ye fnrther twynne
n Whiche ſhal the firſt tale begynne
Syr knyght quod he my maſter and my lorde
Now draw with cut for that is myn accorde
Cometh hether quod he my lady prioreſſe
And ye Syr clerke let by your ſhamefaſtnes
Ne ſtudye nat. leyn hand euery man
Anone to draw wey euery wight began
And ſhortely to telle as it was
Were it by auenture fortune or caas
The ſothe is this. the cut fyl on the knyght
Of whiche fulle blith and glade is euery wight
And telle he muſt as it was reſon
By forward and by compoſicion
As ye haue herde What nedith wordes mo
And whan this gode man ſawe that it was ſo
As he that was wiſe and obedient
To kepe his forward by his fre aſſent
He ſaide ſithnes I ſhal begynne the game
What welcom be cut in goddes name
Now let vs ryde and herken What I ſay
And with that worde we riden forth our wey
And he began with a right mery chere
And ſeyd anone his tale as ye ſhalle here

Here begynneth the knightes tale



Whilom as olde stories tellith vs
Ther was a duke yight Theseus
Of Thebes he was lorde and gouernour
And in his tyme suche a conquerour
That gretter was ther none vndre the sonne
Fulle many a riche contre hadde he wonne
That with his wisdom and chevalry
He conquered alle the regne of femeny
That whilom was cleped Cithea
And wedded the quene ypolita
And brought her home in his contre
With moche glorye and solennyte
And eke her yonge suster Emely
And thus with victory and melody
Let I this worthy duke to athenes ryde
And alle his hoost in harneys him beside
And certes if it nere to long to here

I wolde haue tolde fully the matere
How wonne was the regne of femyne
By theseus and by his chevalry
And of the grete bataille for the nones
Betwix Atheues and amasones
And how beseged was ypolita
The faire hardy quene of Cithea
And of the fest that was at hir wedding
And of the tempest at hir home comyng
But alle that thyng I moot as now forbere
I haue god wote a large felde to ere
And wete been the oxen in my plow
The remenaunt of my tale is long ynow
I wil nat let eche none of this route
Let euery felow telle his tale aboute
And let se now who shalle the soupir wynne
And there I left I wille agayn begynne
His duke of whom I make mencion
t Whan he was come almost to the toun
In al his welthe and his moost pryde
He was ware as he cast his eye a syde
Where that there kneled in the high wey
A compayny of ladies twey and twey
Eche after other clad in clothes blake
But suche a crye and suche a wo they make
That in this world nys creature lyuyng
That herde suche an other weymenting
And of this cry they nolde neuir stenten
Tyl they the reynes of his bridel henten
What folke be ye that at my home comyng
Perturben so my fest with cryinge
Quod Theseus. haue ye so grete enuye
Of myn honour that thus compleyn and crye

Or who hath you myſboden or offended
And telme if it may be amended
And why that ye be clothed thus in blake
The oldeſt lady of them alle ſpake
Whan ſhe had ſwoned with a dedly chere
That it was rewth to ſe and to here
The ſayd lorde to whom fortune hath yeue
Victory. and as a conqueroure to lyue
Nought greueth vs youre glory and youre honour
But we beſeke you of mercy and ſocour
Haue mercy on oure woo and diſtreſſe
Som drope of pite thrugh thy gentilneſſe
Vpon vs wrecched women let now falle
For certes lorde there is none of vs alle
That ſhe ne hath been duchеſſe or a quene
Now be we caytiffes as it is wele ſene
Thanked be fortune and her fals whele
That none eſtate enſureth to be wele
Now certes lorde to abide youre preſence
Here in this temple of the goddeſſe clemence
We haue be wayting alle this fourtnyght
Now help vs lord ſith it lieth in thy might
I wrecche which that wepe and wayle thus
Whilom wif to kyng Campaneus
That ſtarft at thebes a curſed be that day
And alle we that been in this araye
And make alle this lamentacion
We loſten alle oure huſbondes at that toun
Whiles that the ſege there aboute lay
And yet now the olde creon wela way
That lord is now of Thebes that cite
Fulfilled of ire and iniquite
He for deſpite and for his tiranny

To doon the ded bodies bilony
Of alle our lordes which that been slawe
Hath alle the bodies on an hepe y drawe
And wol nat suffre theym by none assent
Neither to be buryed ne to be brent
But maketh houndes to ete them in dispite
And with that worde with oute more respite
They fallen groueling and cry pitously
Haue on vs wrechid women som mercy
And let our sorow synke in thyn herte
This gentil duke of his cours sterte
With herte pitous whenne he herde them speke
Him thought his hert wolde breke
Whey he sawe them so pitous and so mate
That whilom were of so grete estate
And in his armes he them alle vp hent
And them conforteth in fulle gode entent
And swore his othe as he was trew knight
He wolde do so ferforth his might
Vpon the tyraunt creon him to wreke
That alle the peple of grece shuld speke
How Creon was of theseus y serued
As he that hath his deth wele deserued
And right anone withouten more abode
His baner he displaied and forth he rode
To thebes warde and alle his oost beside
No ner athenes nolde he go ne ryde
Ne take his ease nat fully half a day
But on his wey that nyght he lay
And sent anone ypolita the queene
And Emely her yonge fustre shene
Vnto the toun of athenes to duelle
And forth he rydeth ther is no more to telle

The rede statue of mars with spere and targe
So shyneth in his white banez large
That alle the feldes glittren vp and doun
And by his banez born is his penon
Of golde full riche in which there was y bete
The mynotaure which he wan in crete
Thus rideth this duke this conquerour
And in his oste of chevalrye the floure
Til that he cam to thebes and alight
Faire in a feld there as he thought to fight
But shortly for to spoke of this thing
With creon whiche was of thebes kyng
He faught . and slaw him manly as a knyght
In plain batailles and put his folke to flight
And at a saute he wan the cite after
And rent a doun walle sparre and rafter
And to the ladies he restored ageyn
The bodies of their husbondes that were slayn
To don obsequyes as tho was the guyse
But it were alle to longe for to devise
The grete clamour and the weymenting
That the ladies made atte brennyng
Of the bodies . and the grete honour
That Theseus the noble conquerour
Doth to the ladies when they from him went
But shortly for to telle is myn entent
When that this worthy duke this Theseus
Hath creon slayne and wan thebes thus
Stylle in the felde he toke al night his rest
And did with alle the contre as him list
He ransaked in the taas of bodies dede
Them for to stripe of harneys and of wede
The pyllours dyde their bestyalle and cure

Aftez the batayllе and the diſcomfiture
And ſo befyllе that in that caas they fonde
Thzow gyrt with many a greueus wounde
Two yong knyghtes lyyng by and by
Bothe in one harneys wrought fullе richely
Of whiche two arcite hight that one
And the othez knyght hight Palamon
Nat fully quicke ne fully dede they were
But by theiz cote armure and theiz gere
The heroldes knew theym beſt in ſpecialle
As that they were of the blode royalle
Of thebes and of Iuſtryn two y boze
Dute of the taas the pyllours haue theym toze
And haue theym caried ſoft into the tent
Of theſeus . and he fulle ſone theym ſent
To athenes to dwellе thezе in pryſon
Pezpetuellе foz he nolde no raunſon
And when this wozthy duke hadde thus doon
He tokе his hooſt and home he gothe anone
With laurez crowned as a conqueroure
And there he lyueth in Ioye and in honoure
Terme of his lyf what nedith wordes moo
And in a toure in angupſſhe and with woo
Dwellith palamon and his felaw arcite
Foz euermoze thez may no golde theym quyte
Thus paſſed yere by yere and day by day
Tyll it felonеs in a mornyng of May
That Emely that fairez was to ſeen
Than is the lely vpon the ſtalke grene
And freſſhez than may with floures newe
Foz with the roſe colour ſtroue hez hew
I not which was the fairez of theym two
Ez it was day as was hez wonte to do

She was a ryseȝ and alle redy dight
For may wol haue no slogarde a nyght
The seasoȝ prikith euery gentil hert
And makith him oute of his slepe to stert
And saȝeth aryse and do thyȝ obseruauncis
This makith Emely to haue remembraunces
To do honour to may and for to ryse
Yclothed fresshe was she to deuyse
Her yelow heere was broyded in a tresse
Behinde her bake a long yerd I gesse
And in the gardeyn at the sonne uprist
She walked up and doun and as her liste
She gadred floures part white and rede
To make a subtel chapelet for her hede
And as an aungel heuynly she soȝ
The grete toure that was so thicke and stronge
Which of the castel was the chief dungeoȝ
There as the knyghtes were in pryson
Of whiche I tolde you and telle shalle
Was euyn ioynaunt to the gardyn walle
There as this Emely hadde her pleiyng
Bright was the sonne and clere that morȝyng
And palamon this woful prisoner
As was his wone by leue of his gayler
Was ryseȝ and rometh in the chambre on high
In which alle the noble cyte he seith
And eke the gardyn ful of braunches grene
There as this fresshe Emely the shene
Was in her walk and romed up and downe
This sorouful prisoner this palamon
Goth in the chambre rowmyng to and fro
And to him selue compleyned of his woo
That he was borne full ofte he seyde allas

And so befyl by auenture and caas
That through a wyndow of many a barre
Of iron grete and square as any sparre
He cast his eyen vpon Emelya
And therwith he blent and cryed aa
As though he were stongen to the hert
And with that cry arcite anone vp stert
And saide cosyn myne what ayleth the
That art so pale and dedly on to see
Why criest thou who hath do the offence
For goddes loue take alle in pacience
Our pryson. for it may non other be
Fortune hath yeue vs this aduersite
Or elles som wiked aspecte or disposicion
Of saturne. by som constellacion
Hath yeue vs this al though we had sworn
So stode the heuyn whan we were born
We must endure this is the shorte and pleyn
This palamon aunswerd and seid a geyn
Cosyn forsoth of this opunyon
Thou hast a veyn ymaginacion
This pryson causeth me nat to crye
But I was hurt now through myn eye
Vnto my hert that wol my bane be
The fairnesse of a lady that I se
yondre in the gardeyn rolwmyng to and fro
Is cause of my cryng and my woo
I not whether she be woman or goddesse
But venus it is sothely as I gesse
And therwith alle on knees doun he fylle
And said venus if it be thy wille
you in this gardeyn thus to transfigure
Biforе me sorowfulle wrecche thy creature

Oute of this pryson helpe that we may shape
And if it be oure destynye so be shape
By eterne worde to dye in pryson
Of oure lignage haue som compassion
That is so lowe y brought by tyrannye
And with that worde arcyte can espye
Where as the lady went to and froo
And with that sight hez beaute hurte him so
That if palamon were wounded soze
Arcyte is hurt a smoche oz moze
And with a sygh he sayde piteously
The fresshe beaute me sleeth sodenly
Of hez that rowmeth in yondre place
And but I haue hez mercy and hez grace
That I may see hez at the leste wey
I nam but dede there is no moze to seye
His palamon when he these wordes herde
t Dispiteously he loketh and answerd
Whether saist thou this in erneste oz in pleye
Nay quod arcyte in erneste by my fay
God helpe me so I lust ful litel to pley
This palamon gan knytte his browes twey
It were quod he to the no grete honoure
For to be false ne for to be a traytoure
To me that am thy cosyn and thy brother
y swozne fuldepe and eche of bs to other
That neuir for to dyen in the peyn
Tyl that the deth departe shalle bs tweyn
Neyther of bs in loue to hyndre other
Ne in non other case my leue brother
And that thou shuldest further me
In euery case as I shulde further the
This was thyn othe and myne certeyn

I wote it wele thou darst it nat withsayen
Thus art thou of my counseil withoute doute
And nowe thou woldest falsely be aboute
To loue my lady whom I loue and serue
And euir shalle tilie that myn herte sterue
Nowe certes fals arcite thou shalt nat so
I loued hir first and tolde the my wo
As to my counsel and to my brother swoin
To further me as I haue tolde bifoin
For which thou art bounden as a knyght
To helpe me if it lay in thy myght
Or elles art thou fals I dar wele seyn
This arcite fulle proudely spake ageyn
Thou shalt quod he be rather fals than I
But thou art fals I telle the vtterly
For paramour I loued hir first er thou
What wilt thou seyen thou wistest nat yet nowe
Whether she be a woman or a goddesse
Thyn is affection of holynesse
And myn is loue as to a creature
For which I tolde the myn auenture
As to my cosyn and my brother swoin
I suppose thou louedest hir bifoin
Wotest thou nat wele the olde clerkes sawe
That who shalgyue a louer any lawe
Loue is a greter lawe by my panne
Than may be gyue of any erthly man
And therfore positif lawe and suche decree
Is broken alday for loue in eche degree
A man must nedes loue maugre his hede
He may nat flee it though he shuld be dede
All be she mayde widowe or wif
And eke it is nat likely al thy lyf

That haste the sight of her and I thabsence
For possible it is sithnes thou hast her presence
And art a knyght a worthy man and able
That by som caas sith fortune is chaungeable
Thou mayst somtyme to thy desyre atteyne
But I that am exiled and barreyn
Of alle grace and so in grete dispeyr
That there nys water erth fyre ne eyre
Ne creature that of them maked is
That may me bele or do comfort in this
Wele ought I sterue in wanhope and distresse
Farewele my lif my lust and my gladnesse
Alas why playnen men so in comune
Of purueaunce of god or of fortune
That yeueth them ofte in many wise
Wele bettre than them self can deuyse
Som men desire to haue richesse
That cause is of grete seknesse
And som man wolde oute of his pryson fayne
That in his house of his meyne is slayn
Infinite harmes be in this matere
We woot nat what thing we pray here
We farey as he that dronke is as a mouse
A dronken man wote wele he hath an house
But he woot nat whiche is the right wey thider
And to a dronken man the wey is slider
And certes in this worlde so fare we
We seken fast after felicite
But we go wrong ful ofte truly
Thus may we sey alle. and namely I
That wende haue hadde a grete opinyon
That and I myght scape oute of pryson
Than hadde I be in ioye and parfite hele

There now I am exiled from myn Wele
Sithnes I may nat se you Emely
I ne am but dede there is no remedy
Upon that other syde Palamon
Whan that he Wist Arcite Was gone
Suche sorow he maketh that the grete toure
Resouned of his yelling and clamour
The pure feters on his shynnes grete
Were of his bytter salte teres Wete
Allas quod he Arcite cosyn myne
Of alle oure stryf god Woot the frute is thyne
Thou Walkest now in thebes at thy large
And of my Wo thou yeuest litelle charge
Thou mayst say thou hast Wisdome and manhede
Assemble alle the folke of oure kynrede
And make Warre so sharpe in this countre
That by som auenture or by som tretie
Thou mast haue her to lady and to Wif
For Whom I must nedes lese my lyf
For as by Wey of possibilite
Sithnes thou art at large of pryson free
And art a lorde grete in this auauntage
More than is myn that sterue here in a cage
For I may Wepe and Wayl Whiles I lyue
With alle the Woo that pryson may me yeue
And eke Withe peyne that loue me yeueth also
That doubleth alle my tourment and my Woo
Therwith the fyre of Jelousye up stert
Within his breest and hent him by the herte
So Wodely that he liklyest Was to beholde
The boystre or asshen dede or colde
That sayde o cruel goddesse that gouerne
The Worlde With byndyng of youre Worde etern

And Writen in the table of the athamant
Your parlement and your etern grant
What is mankynde more vnto you hold
Than is the shepe that rouketh in the fold
For slayn is man right as any other best
And dwellith eke in prison and in arest
And hath seknesse and grete aduersite
And ofte tyme giltles pardé
What gouernail is in this prescience
That giltles turmentith Innocence
And yet encresith this alle my penaunce
That man is bounde to his obseruaunce
For goddes sake to letten of his Wille
There as a beest may alle his lust fulfylle
And Whan a beest is dede he hath no peyn
And after his deth man may Wepe and pleyn
Though in this Worlde he haue care and Woo
Withoute doute it may stonde so
The aunsuer of this lete I to deuynes
But Wele I Woot in this World gret pyne is
Allas I se a serpent or a theif
That many a true man hath do myschief
Gone at his large and Where him list may turne
Vnt I must be in prison through saturne
And through him vnhappy and eke Wood
That hath distroyed Wele nygh alle the blode
Of thebes. With his Wast Walles Wide
And venus sleeth me in that other side
For Ielousye and fere of him arcite
Now Wol I stint of palamon a lyte
And let him in his prison stille duelle
And of Arcite forth I Wolde you telle
The somer passed the nyghtes Wayex long

Encreſith he double wiſe the peynes ſtrong
Bothe of the louer and of the pryſoner
I ne woot who hath the wofuller myſter
For ſhortly to ſay this palamon
Perpetually is dampned to pryſon
In cheynes and in feters to be dede
And arcite is exiled on his hede
For euirmore as oute of that countre
For neuir more ſhal he his lady ſee
Yow louers aſke I now this queſtion
Who hath the worſe of arcite or palamon
That one may ſe his lady day by day
But in pryſon muſt he dwelle alwey
That other where him lyſt may ryde or go
But ſe his lady ſhalle he neuir mo
Now demeth as ye liſt ye that can
For I wille telle forth as I began
Whan that arcite to thebes come was
Ful ofte alday he ſwelt and ſayd alas
For ſe his lady ſhal he neuir moo
And ſhortely to concclude alle his woo
So moche ſorow ne hath creature
That is or ſhalbe while the worlde may dure
His ſlepe his mete his drinke is him beraft
That lene he way and drye as is a ſhaft
His eyen holow and griſly to behode
His hew falw and pale as aſſhen colde
And ſolitary he was and euir allone
And wayling al the nyght making his mone
And if he herd ſong or inſtrument
Than wolde he wepe he myght nat ſtent
So feble were his ſpirites and ſo low
And chaunged ſo that no man coude know

His speche ne his voyce though men it herde
As in his gyre for alle the worlde it ferde
Nought only lyke the louers malady
Of hereos but rather like to many
Engendred of humour malancolike
Before in his celle fantastike
And shortly turned vp so doun
Both habite and disposicioun
Of him this wofull louer day Arcite
What shold I of his wo alday endite
Whan he endured hadde a yere or two
This cruel turment this peyne and woo
At Thebes in his countre as I sayde
Vpon a nyght in slepe as he him layde
Him thought how that wynged Mercury
Biforn him stode and bad de him be mery
His slepy yerde he baar in honde vp right
An hat he wered vpon his heres bright
Arrayed was this god as he tok kepe
As he was whan argus tok his shepe
And sayd him thus to Athenes thou shalt wende
There is the shape of thy woo an ende
And with that worde Arcite awoke and stert
Now truly how sore that me smert
Quod he to Athenes wil I fare
Ne for no drede of deth shal I spare
To se my lady that I loue and serue
In her presence reche I nat to sterue
And with that worde he caught a myrour
And saw that chaunged was his colour
And saw his visage in a nother kynde
And right anone it ran him in his mynde
That sithen his face was so disfigured

Of malady the whiche he hadde endured
He might wele if that he bare him lowe
Lyue in athenes euirmore vnknowe
And se his lady wele nygh day be day
And right anone he chaunged his array
And cladde him in a poure labourer
And alone saue only a poure squyer
That knew his pryuite and alle his caas
Whiche was disguysed pourly as he was
To athenes is he gone the next way
And to the courte he went vpon a day
And at the gate he profered his seruice
To drugge and to drawe / what men wolde deuyse
And shortly of this matere for to seyn
He fil in office toward a chamberleyn
The whiche that was duellinge with Emely
For he was wise and wele coude aspye
Of euery seruaunt whiche that serued there
Wele coude he hewe wode and watere bere
For he was yonge and mighty for the nones
And therto he was strong and big of bones
To do that ony wight him coude deuyse
A yere or two he was in this seruice
Page in the chambre of Emely the bright
And philostrate he seyde that he hight
But half so wele a loued man as he
Ne was there none in courte of his degre
He was so gentyl of condicioun
That through alle the courte of his renoun
They sayde that it were grete charyte
That Theseus wolde enhaunse his degre
And put him in a worshipful seruice
There that he myght his vertue exercise

And thus Within a While his name ſprong
Both of his dedes and of his gode tong
That Theſeus hath take him ſo nere
That of his chambre he made him a ſquyer
And yaue him golde to mayntene his degre
And eke men brought him oute of his countre
Fro yere to yere ful priuely his rent
But honeſtly and ſlyghly he it ſpent
That no man Wonder how that he it hadde
And thre yere in this Wiſe his lif he ladde
And bare him in peaſe and eke in Werre
There Was no man that Theſeus hadde derre
And in this bliſſe lete I now arcite
a And ſpeke I Wille of Palamon a lite
In derkneſſe horrible and ſtrong pryſon
This ſeuyn yere hath ſete this Palamon
Fro yere to yere What for Woo and diſtreſſe
Who feleth double Woo and heuyneſſe
But Palamon that loue diſtreyneth ſoo
And Wode oute of his Witte he goth for Woo
And eke therto he is a pryſoner
Parpetualle and nat only for a yere
Who coude ryme in engliſſhe properly
His martirdome forſoth it am nat I
Therfore I paſſe aſlyghly as I may
It fyl in that ſeuynth yere in may
The thridde nyght as olde bokes ſayn
That alle this ſtory tellen more playn
Were it by auenture or deſtyne
As that Whan a thing is ſhapyn it ſhalbe
That ſone after the midnyght Palamon
By helpe of a frende broke hath his pryſon
And fleeth the cyte as ſone as he may go

For he hadde yeue his gaylez drinke so
Of a clarzey made of a certayne wyne
With nercotises and oppe of thebes fyne
That alle nyght though men wolde him shake
The gaylez so slepte he myght nat awake
And thus he fleeth as fast as he may
The nyght was shorte and fast by the day
That nedes cost he must him selue hyde
And to a groue fast there beside
With dredefulfote thay stalkith palamon
For shortly this was his opunyon
That in that groue he wolde him hide alday
And in the nyght thay wolde he take his wey
To thebes warde his frendes for to prey
On theseus to helpe him to werzey
And shortly eythez he wolde lese his lyf
Or wynne faire Emely to his wif
This is the effecte and the entent playne
Now wol I turne to Arcite ageyn
That lytel wist how nygh was his care
Tyl that fortune hadde brought him in the snare
The mery larke messanger of day
Salueth in hez song the morow gray
And firy phebus riseth vp so bright
That alle the orient laughith of that sight
And with the stremes drieth the greues
The siluez droppes hanging on the leues
And Arcite that in the courte ryalle
With theseus his squyez principalle
Is zysen and loketh on the mery day
And for to do his obseruaunce to may
Remembring on the poynte of his desire
He on his couez startling as the fyre

Is ryden to the feldes him to pley
Oute of the courte were it a myle or twey
And to the groue of whiche that I you tolde
By auenture his wey he can to holde
To make him a garlond of the greues
Were it of wodebinde or of hauthorn leues
And loude he song ayenst the sonne shene
May with alle thy floures and thy grene
Welcom be thou fresshe faire may
In hope that I som grene get may
And fro his courser with a lusty herte
Into the groue ful hastely he sterte
And in a pathe he rowmed vp and doun
There as by auenture this Palamon
Was in a busshe that noman might him se
For sore aferde of his deth was he
No thing knew he that this was Arcite
God wote he wolde haue trowed it fulle lite
But soth is sayd go sithen many yeres
That feld hath eyen and wode hath eres
It is fulle faire a man to bere him euyn
For alday men mete at vnset steuyn
For litel went Arcite of his felawe
That was so nygh to herkyn alle his sawe
Whan that Arcite hadde rowmed al his fille
Palamon in the busshe now sitteth stille
And Arcite song alle the roundel lustely
Into a studie he fel sodenly
As doon these louers in their quente geres
Now in the crop and now in the breres
Now vp now doun as bokel in a welle
Right as the fryday sothly for to telle
Now it shyneth now it reyneth fast

Right so can gueryy venus ouer caſt
The hertes of her folke right as her day
Is gueriful. right ſo chaunged ſhe aray
Selden is the fryday alle the woke like
Whan that arcite hadde ſonge he gan to ſike
And he ſet him doun without any more
Allas quod he the day that I was bore
How long Juno through thy cruelte
Wilt thou werien thebes the cyte
Allas y brought is to confuſion
The blode ryalle of Cadme and Amphion
Of Cadmus whiche was the firſt man
That Thebes bilte or firſt the toun began
And of the cyte firſt was crowned king
Of his lynage am I and of his offspring
By verray lyne as of the ſtoke ryalle
And now I am ſo kaytif and ſo thralle
That he that is my mortalle enemy
I ſerue him and am his ſquier pouerly
And yet doth me Juno wele more ſhame
For I dare nat be knowe myn owen name
But there as I wonte was to hight Arcite
Now hight I philoſtrate nat worth a myte
Allas thou fel mars allas thou Juno
Thus youre ire hath our lynage alfordo
Saue only me and wrechid palamon
That Theſeus martreth in pryſon
And ouer alle thus to ſle me vtterly
Loue hath his fyry darte ſo brennyngly
Ithrogh my true careful herte
That ſharpen was erſt my deth than my ſherte
ye ſle me with youre eyen Emely
ye be the cauſe wherfore that I dye

Of alle the remenaunt of myn other care
Ne sette I nat the mountance of a tare
So that I coude do aught to your plesaunce
And With that Worde he fyl doun in a traunce
A longe tyme and afterWarde he up stert
This Palamon that thought through his herte
He felt a colde sWerde sodenly glyde
For ire he quoke he nolde nomengre abide
And Whan that he hath herd Arcites tale
As he were Wode With face dede and pale
He stert him up oute of the busshe thicke
And seid Arcite falsse traytour Wicke
Now art thou hent that louest my lady soo
For Whom that I haue this peyne and Woo
And art my blode and to my counceyl sWorn
And I ful ofte haue tolde the here bifornn
And hast be iaped here duke Theseus
And falsely hast chaunged thy name thus
I Wil be dede or elles thou shalt dye
Thou shalt nat loue my lady Emely
But I Wille loue her only and no moo
For I am Palamon thy mortal foo
And though I haue no Weppyn in this place
But oute of prysonn am stert by grace
I drede nat outher thou shalt dye
Or thou ne shalt nat louen Emely
Chese Whiche thou Wilt. thou shalt nat asterte
This Arcite With fulle despitous herte
Whan he him knew and hadde his tale herde
As fers as lyon pulled oute his swerde
And sayde thus by god that sytte a boue
Nere it that thou art sek and Wode for loue
And eke that thou no Weppyn hast in this place

Thou ſholdeſt neuer oute of this grouе pace
That thou ne ſhuldeſt dye of myn hond
For I deſye thy ſurete and thy bond
Which that thou ſayſt I haue made to the
What deryy fole thinke that loue is fre
And I wol loue her magre al thy might
But for aſmoche as thou art a knyght
And wilneſt to darrayne here by bataille
Haue here my trouth to morow I wille nat fayle
Withoute witting of any other wight
That here I wolbe founden as a knyght
And bringen harneys right ynow for the
And cheſe the beſt and leue the worſt to me
And mete and drinke this nyght wil I bring
ynow for the and clothes for thy bedding
And if ſo be that thou my lady wynne
And ſle me in this wode that I am in
Thou maiſt wele haue thy lady as for me
This palamon anſuerd I grant it the
And thus they be departed til amorow
When either of them hath leid his feith to borow
Occupied oute of alle charite
O regne that wolde ſt haue no felaw with the
Ful ſoth is ſaid that loue ne lordſhip
Wil nat his thankes haue ony felauſhip
We finde this of arcite and palamon
Arcite is ryden anone into the toun
And on the morowe anone or it were light
Ful pryuely two harneys hath he dight
Both ſufficient and mete and to darreyen
The batayle in the felde bitwix them twayne
And on his horſe allone as he was born
He caried the harneys him biforn

And in the groue at tyme and place set
This arcite and this palamon bee ȳ mette
Tho chaunge gan the colour in her face
Right as the hunters in regne of trace
That stondeth at the gappe With a spere
Whan hunted is the lyoun and the bere
And herith hym come russhing in the greues
And breketh both bowes and eke leuys
And thinketh here cometh my mortal ennemy
With oute faile he must be dede or I
For either I must sle him atte gappe
Or he must sle me if I mys happe
So ferden they in chaunging of their hew
As fer as ony of them other knew
Ther nas no gode day ne salutyng
But streight With oute wordes of rehersing
Euerich of them helpith to arme other
As frendly as he were his owen brother
And after that With sharpe speres stronge
They foryneyche at other wonder long
Thou myghtist wene that this palamon
In his fightyng were a wode lyon
And as a cruel tigre Was arcite
As Wilde bores gan they to gidder smyte
That frothen White as fome for ire Wode
Up to the ancle faught they in their blode
And in this Wise I lette them fyghting duelle
And forsoth I Wil of the seus you telle
The destenye mynistre generalle
That executeth in the worlde ouer alle
The purueaunce that god hath seen bifore
So strange it is that though the worlde hath swore
The contrary of a thing by ye or nay

yet ſomtyme it ſhal falle vpon a day
That falleth nat eſt in a thouſand yere
And certaynly our appetites here
Be it of peaſe hate warre or loue
Alle is ruled by the ſighte aboue
This mene I now by myghty Theſeus
That for to hunte is ſo deſirous
And namely at the grete herte in May
That in his bedde there da with him no day
That he nys cladde and redy for to ryde
With hunte and horne and houndes him beſide
For in his huntyng hath he ſuche delite
That it is alle his ioye and alle his appetite
To be him ſelue the grete hertes bane
For after Mars he ſerued no dyane
Clere was the day as I haue tolde er this
And theſeus with alle ioye and blis
With his ypolita the faire quene
And Emely yclothed alle in grene
And huntyng been they ryden ryally
And to the groue that ſtode there faſt by
In whiche ther was an herte as men him tolde
Duke Theſeus the ſtreight wey hath holde
And to the lande he rideth fulle right
For thider was the hert wont to haue his flight
And ouer a broke and ſo forth on his wey
The duke wolde haue a cours of him or two wey
With houndes ſuche as he liſt to tocomande
And whan this duke was come to the lande
Vndre the ſonne he loked and that anon
He was ware of Arcite and Palamon
That foughten breme as it were bores two
The bright ſwerdes went to and fro

So hidously that with the lest strok̃e
He semed that it wolde haue felled ony ch̃e
But what they were nothing he ne wote
This duke with his spores his courser smote
And at a stert he was betwix them two
And pulled oute his swerde and sayde ho
No more on peyne of lesing of your hede
By mighty mars anone he shalbe dede
That smyteth any strok̃e that I may se
But telleth me what myster men ye be
That been so hardy to fight here
Without any Juge or other officere
As though it were in listes royally
This Palamon answerd hastely
And sayde sir what nedith wordes moo
We haue the deth deserued bothe two
Two wofull wrecches be we two captyues
That been encombred of oure owne lyues
And as thou arte a right ful lorde and iuge
Ne yeue vs nether mercy ne refuge
But slee me first for seint charite
But slee my felaw ch̃e as wele as me
Or slee him first for though thou knowe him lite
He is thy mortalle foo this is arcite
That fro thy londe was banysshed on his hede
For whiche he hath deserued to be dede
For this is he that cam to thy gate
And sayde that he hight philostrate
Thus he hath iaped the ful many a yere
And thou hast made him thy chief squyer
And this is he that loueth Emely
For sithnes the day is come that I shalle dye
I make pleynly my confessioun

That I am that woful Palamon
That hath thy pryson broke wickedly
I am thy mortal foo and he am I
That loueth so hote Emely the bright
That I wold dye here present in hir sight
Therfore I as he deth of my gewyse
But slee my felaw in the same wise
For both haue we deserued to be slayn
His worthy Duke anserued anone ageyn
t And said this is a shorte conclusioun
your owyn mouth be your confessioun
Hath dampned you and I wil it record
It nedith nat to pey ne you with the cord
ye shalde dye by myghty Mars the rede
The quene anone for verray womanhede
Gan to wepe and so did Emely
And alle the ladyes in that company
Grete pyte was as them thought alle
That euir suche a chaunce shulde be falle
For gentylmen they were and of grete astate
And no thing but for loue was this debate
And saw their blody wounds wyde and sore
And alle cryden both lasse and more
Haue mercy lorde vpon vs women alle
And on their bare knees doun they falle
And wolde haue kyst his feet there as he stode
Til at the last aslaked was his mode
For pyte renneth sone in gentyl hert
And though he first for ire quoke and stert
He considered shortly in a clause
The trespas of them both and eke the cause
And al though that his ire their gilt accused
yet in his reason he them bothe excused

As thus he thought that euery man
Wol helpe him selue in loue as he can
And deliuer him selue oute of pryson
And eke in his hert he hadde compassion
Of Women for they were euer in one
And in his gentyl hert he thought anoon
And soft vnto him selue he sayd fy
Upon a lord that wyl haue no mercy
But be a lyoun both in word and dede
To them that been in repentaunce and drede
As wel as a proude dispitous man
That wyl mayntene that he first began
That lord hath lytel of discrecion
That in suche a caas can no diuision
But weyeth pryde and humblenesse after one
And shortly whan his ire is thus a gone
He gan to loke on them with eyen blake and vgly
And spake these wordes al on hye
The god of loue a benedicite
How myghty and how grete a lord is he
Ayenst his might there gayneth non obstakyl
He may be cleped a god for his myracle
For he can make at his owyn guyse
Of euery herte as him list deuyse
Lo here this Arcite and this palamon
That quyetly cam oute of my prison
And myght haue lyued in Thebes ryally
And knowen that I am their mortal enemy
And that their deth lieth in my myght also
And yet hath loue maugre their eyn two
Brought them hither both for to dye
Now loketh is nat this an high folye
Who may be a foole but if that he loue

Beholde for goddes sake that sitteth aboue
Se how they blede be they nat wele arrayed
Thus hath their lord the god of loue them payd
Their wages and their fees of their seruice
And yet they wene for to be ful wise
That serue loue for aught that may falle
But this is yet the best game of alle
That she for whom they haue this jolite
Can them therfore as moche thanke as me
She wote nomore of alle this hote fare
By god than wote a cuckow or an hare
But al must be assayd hote or colde
A man must be a foole yong or olde
I wote it by my selue full long agoon
For in my tyme a seruaunt was I one
And therfore sithnes I knew of loues peyne
And wote how sore it can a man distreyn
As he that hath be caught in his laas
I you forgeue alle holy this trespas
And atte request of the quene that kneleth here
And eke of Emely my sustre dere
And ye shal both anone vnto me swere
That neuir mo ye shal my countre dere
Ne make warre on me nyght ne day
But be my frendes in alle that ye may
I you forgeue this trespas enerydele
And they him sware his asking faire and wele
And him of lordship and mercy prayed
And he them graunted and thus he sayd

D spekе of worthy lynage and richesse
Though that she were a quene or a princesse
Eche of you both is worthy doutelesse
To wedde whan tyme is. but nenirtheles

I spekе as for my sustre Emely
For whom ye haue this stryf and this Jelousy
ye wote your self ye may nat wedde two
At oues. though that ye fight euir mo
That one of you al be him loth or lief
He mot go pype in an Ivy leef
This is to sey she may nat haue both
Al be ye neuir so Jelous and so lothe
And for thy I you put in this degre
That eche of you shal haue his destene
As him is shapyn and herkyn in what wise
Lo here youir ende of that I shal deuyse
My wyl is this for plat conclusioun
Without any more replicacioun
yf that you lyketh take it for the best
That euerich of you shalle go where him lyst
Frely without raunson or daungere
And this day fyfty wekes fer ne nere
Euerich of you shal bring an hundreth knyghtes
Armed for lystes vp at al rightes
Al redy to darreyne here by batayle
And this behote I you with oute fayle
Vpon my trouthe and as I am true knight
That whether of you both hath that myght
That is to sey whether he or thou
May with his hundreth as I spake of now
Slen his contrary or oute of lystes dryue
Him shal I yeue Emely to wyue
To whom that fortune yeueth so faire a grace
The lystes shal I make on this place
And god so wisly on my soule rewe
As I shal euyne iuge be and true

ye ſhal none other ende with me make
That one of you ne ſhalbe dede or take
And if ye thinke this is wele ſayd
Sayeth your aduyſe and holde you paide
This is your end and your concluſioun
Who lokith now lightly but Palamon
Who ſpryngeth vp for ioy but Arcite
Who coude tell or who coude endite
The ioy that made is in this place
When Theſeus hadde do ſo fayre a grace
But doun a knees went euery wight
And thanked him with al theire myght
And namely the Thebans oft ſithe
And thus with gode hope and herte blyth
They take theire leue and homward they ryde
To thebes with his olde walles wyde
I trowe men wolde it deme negligence
yf I forgete to telle the diſpence
Of Theſeus that goth ſo beſily
To make vp the lyſtes ryally
That ſuche a noble theatre as it was
I dare wele ſay in this worlde there nas
The circuyte a myle therof was aboute
Walled with ſtone and diched rounde aboute
Rounde was the ſhappe in maner of a compas
Ful of degrees the hight of ſixty paas
That whan a man was ſette in one degre
He letted nat his felawe for to ſee
Eſtward there was a gate of marbyl white
Weſtwarde ſuche an other in thoppoſite
And ſhortly to conclude ſuche a place
Was none in erth of ſo lyte ſpace
For in the londe there was no craftes man

That geometry or arsmetryk can
Ne portreture ne karuar of ymages
That Theseus ne yaf mete and wages
The theatre for to make and deuyse
And for to do his ryte and his sacrifice
He Est warde hath vp on the gate aboue
In worship of venus goddesse of loue
Do make an autre and an Oratory
And on the west warde in memory
Of mars. hath he made suche an other
That cost large of gold a fother
And northward in a toure of the walle
Of whyte alabastre and rede coral
An oratory riche for to see
In worship of dyane goddesse of chastite
Hath Theseus do wrought in noble wise
But yet hadde I forgete for to deuyse
The noble karuyng and the portretures
The shap the countenaunce and the figures
That weren in the oratours thre
First in the temple of venus thou mayst se
Wrought in the walle ful pytously to beholde
The broken slepis and the sighes colde
The secrete teres and the weymentyng
The fyry strokes and the desiring
That loues folkes in this worlde endury
The othes that their couenauntes assury
Pleasaunce hope desire and fool hardynesse
Beaute and youthe baudry and richesse
Charmes and sorcery lesynges and flattry
Dyspense besynesse and Ielousy
That wered of yelow goldes a garlond
And a cuckow sittyng on her hond

Feestes instrumentes carolles and daunses
Lust and arraye and eke the circumstaunces
Of loue. Whiche that I rehyn and tel shalle
Be ordre were peynted on the walle
And mo than I can make mencion
For sothly alle the mounte of Cicheron
That venus hath hir principalle duellyng
Was shewed on the wal hir portrayng
With al the ioy and alle the lustynes
Nat was forpeten the porters ydelnesse
Ne Narcisus the fayre yore agoon
Ne yet the foly of king Salamon
The enchauntment of medea and hardynesse
Of Jason I wil nat nowe expresse
Ne yet the strenght of hercules
Thenchauntment of medea and Circes
Ne of turnus with his hard fyers corage
The riche Cresus captyf in seruage
Thus may ye se that Wisdome ne richesse
Beaute sleyght strenght ne hardynesse
Ne may with venus holde champartie
For as hir lyst the worlde she may gye
So alle these folke caught were in hir laas
Tyl they for wo ful oft sayd allas
Suffiseth these ensamples one or two
And though I coude rehyn a thousand mo
The statue of venus glorious for to se
Was naked fletyng in the large see
And fro the naupl doun al couerd she was
With wawes grene and bright as any glas
A cytole in hir right hand hadde she
And on hir hede ful semely on to se
A rose gerlond fresshe and wele smellyng

A boue her hede dounes alsofly hering
Bifor hem stode her sonne cupyde
Upon his shulders wynges hadde he two
And blynde he was as it is ofte seen
A bowe he baar and arowes bright and kene
Why shulde I nat eke telle you alle
The portreyt that was upon the walle
Within the temple of myghty mars the rede
Alle was peynted the walles in length and brede
Lyke to the estris of the grysly place
That hight the grete temple of mars in trace
In that colde northern frosty regioun
There as Mars hath his souerayne mansioun
First on the walle was peynted a forest
In which ther duelleth neyther man ne best
With knotty and knerry barayn trees olde
Of stubbes sharpe and hidous to beholde
In which ran a rumbil in a snowe
As though it a storme were shulde breste euery bowe
And downward on an hyl vndre abent
There stode the temple of marce armypotent
Wrought of alle burnyd stele the which the entre
Was long and streyght and gastly for to se
And therout cam a rage and suche a veyse
That it made alle the gates for to reyse
The northren light at the doore shone
For window on the walle was ther none
Through which men myght any light discerne
The doores were al of athemaundes etern
Clenchyd ouerthwart and endlong
With iron tow for to make it strong
Euery pyler the temple for to susteyn
Was tonne grete of yron bryght and sheene

There saw I first the derke ymagenyng
Of felony and alle the compassing
The cruel ire rede as any glede
The pykpurs and ehe the pale drede
The smylez with the knyf vndre the cloke
The shepen brennyng with the blake smoke
The treson of the murdring in the bedde
The open werys with woundes alle bledde
Contake with blody knyf and sharpe manace
And ful of chirlyng was that sory place
The sleez of him selue yet saw I there
His herte blode hath bated al his chere
The nayle y dryue in the shode anyght
The colde deth with mouth gapyng vp right
A myddel of the temple sat myschaunce
With discomforte and sory contenaunce
yet saw I wodenesse laughing in his rage
Armed compleynt. othes and fyers corage
The carayne in the busshe with throte y corue
A thousand slayn. and nat of qualme y storue
The tiraunt with the praye by force y raft
The town distroyed thez was no thing laft
yet saw I brent the shippes hoppsteris
The huntez strangled with the wilde beris
The sow fretyng the childe in the cradyl
The cooke y scalded for alle his long ladyl
Nat forgettyn was the infortune of marte
The cartez ouer rydden with his owyn carte
Vndre the whele ful lowe he lay a downy
There were also of martes deuysioun
The barbour the bouchez and the smyth
That forged sharpe swerdes in the stith
And al a boute depaynted in a toure

Sawe I conqueſt ſittynt in grete honour
With the ſharp ſwerd ouer his hede
Hangyng by a ſubtel twyned threde
Depeynted was there the ſlaughter of Julius
Of grete Nero and of Anthonius
Al be it that thilke tyme they were vnborn
yet was their deth paynted there biforn
By manyſſhing of Marce right by figure
So was it ſhewed right by portreture
As it is depaynted in the ſterres aboue
Who ſhalbe ſlayn or elles dede for loue
Ynſuffiſeth one enſample in ſtorves olde
I may nat reherſe them alle though I wold
The ſtatue of Mars vpon a carte ſtode
Armed and loked grym as he were wode
And ouer his hede thre ſhynen two figures
Of ſterres that been called in ſcriptures
That one puella hight that other Rubeus
This god of armes was arayed thus
A wolf ther ſtode biforn him at his feet
With eyen rede and of a man he ete
With ſubtel penſil was paynted this ſtory
In redoubtynt of Mars and of his glory
Now to the temple of dyane the chaſte
As ſhortly as I can I wil me haſt
To telle you alle the diſcripcion
Depeynted been the walles by and down
Of huntynt and of ſhamefaſt chaſtite
Ther ſaw I how wofful Caliſtope
Whan dyane greuyd was with her
Was turned fro a woman to a bere
And after was ſhe made the lode ſterre
Thus was it peynted I can ſay no ferre

Her ſonne is eke a ſterre as men may ſe
Ther ſaw I dane turned vntyl a tre
I mene nat the goddeſſe dyane
But peneus doughter which that hight dane
There ſaw I atheon an hert y maked
For vengeaunce that he ſaw dyane al naked
I ſaw how that houndes haue him caught
And fretyn him for they knew him naught
yet y peynted was a litel furthermore
How athalante hunted the wylde bore
And meliager and many other mo
For which dyane wrought him care and woo
There ſaw I many a nother wondre ſtory
The whiche me liſt nat drawe in memory
This goddeſſe on an hert high is ſete
With ſmale houndes al aboute hir fete
And vnderneth hir feet ſhe had a mone
Wexynge it was and ſholde wane ſone
In yalwe colour grene hir ſtatue clothed was
With bowe in hond and arowes in a caas
Hir eyen caſt ſhe ful lowe adoun
There pluto hath his derke regioun
A woman trauelinge was hir biſore
But for her childe was ſo longe vnborn
Ful pytouſly lucyna gan ſhe calle
And ſayde help for thou mayſt beſt of alle
Wele coude he peynte lyuely that it wrought
With many a floreyn he his hewes bought
And wel coud he these lystes made and Theſeus
That at his grete coſt hath arayed thus
The temples and the theatre euerydel
Whan it was doon it lyked him wondre wel
But ſtynt I wyl of Theſeus anon

And ſpeke of Palamon and Arcite
The day approcheth of theire retornyng
That eueriche ſhold an hundreth knyghtes bring
The batayle to darreyn as I you tolde
And to Athenes theire couenaunt for to holde
Hath euerich of them brought an hundreth knyghtes
Wele y armed for the warre at al rightes
And ſyrerly there trowed many a man
That neuir ſith the worlde began
As for to ſpeke of knyghthode of their hond
As fer as god hath made ſee and lond
Nas of ſo fewe ſo noble a company
For euery wight that loued cheualry
And wolde his thankes haue a paſſing name
Hath prayed that he might be of that game
And wel was him that therto choſen was
For if there fyl to morow ſuche a caas
Ye knowe wel that euery luſty knyght
That loueth paramours and hath his myght
Were it in englond or elles where
They wolde their thankes willen to be there
To fight for a lady a benedicite
It were a luſty ſight for to ſe
And right ſo faireth they with Palamon
With him there went knyghtes many oon
Som wold be armed in habergeon
Som in breſt plate and in light gippon
And ſom wol haue a peir of plates large
And ſom wolde haue a pryce ſheld and targe
Som wold be armed on his legges wele
And haue an ax and ſom a mace of ſtele
There is no newe guyſe but it was holde
Armed were they as I haue tolde

Eueriche after his owyn opunyon
There mayst thou se comyng with Palamon
Ligurge him selue the grete kyng of trace
Blake was his berde and manly was his face
The circles of his eyen in his hede
They glowden bet wiy yelow and rede
And lyke a gryffyn loked he aboute
With kempte heres in his browes stoute
His lymes grete his brawnes herde and strong
His shuldres brode his armes rounde and long
And as the guyse was in his countre
Fulle high vpon a chare of golde stode he
With foure white boles in the trays
In stede of cote armure ouer his harneys
With nayles yelow and bright as any golde
He hadde a bere shynne cool blake for olde
His long heres were kempt behinde his bake
As any rauen fether it shone for blake
A wreth of golde arme grete of huge weyght
Vpon his hede sat ful of stones bright
Of fyn rubyes and of fyn diamauntes
Aboute his chare ther went alauntes
Twenty and moo as grete as any steer
To hunte atte lyoun or elles at the deer
And folowed him with mosel fast y bounde
Colers of golde and torettes fyled rounde
An hundreth lordes he hadde in his rowte
Armed wel with bertes sterne and stoute
ythe Arcite as men in story fynde
The strong Emetrius the king of ynd
Vpon a bay stede y trapped alle in stele
Armed with a cloth of gold y diapred wele
Cam riding lyke god of armes marte

His cloth armure was of cloth of tarce
Couched with perles white rounde and grete
His sadyl was of brent golde newy bete
A manteket on his shulders hanging
Bret ful of rubyes bright as fyre sparkling
His bright crispe here lyke rynges were ronne
And that was yelow and glitered as the sonne
His nose was high his eyen bright cytrine
His lippes rounde his colour was sanguyne
A fewe frakles in his face were sprent
Betwixy yelow and somdele blakey meynt
And as a lyoun he loked aboute faste
Of yeres were of age I him caste
His berde was wele begonne for to spring
His voyce was as a trompe thondring
Upon his hede he wered of laurer grene
A garlond freshe and lusty for to sene
Upon his honde he baar for his delyte
An egle tame as any lyly white
An hundreth knyghtes hadde he with him there
Al armed saue theire hedes in alle theire gere
Were richely arrayed in al maner thinges
Trusteth wele al erles dukes and kinges
Were gadred in this noble company
For loue and encrece of chevalrye
Aboute this king there ronnen on euery parte
Wele many a tame lioun and libart
And in this wise the lordes alle and som
Been on the sonday to the cite com
Aboute pryme and in the towne alight
This Theseus this duke this worthy knyght
When he hadde brought them into his cite
And ynned them euerich at his degre

He festith them and doth so grete labour
To ease them and to do them alle honoure
That men wenen that no mannes witte
Of none astate ne coude amende it
The mynstralcy the seruice at the feste
The grete giftes to the moost and the leste
The riche arraye of Theseus paleys
Ne who sat first ne last vpon the dese
Ne what ladies fayrest been or best daunsyng
Ne which of them can best daunce or syng
Ne who moost felyngly speketh of loue
What haukes sytten on the perches aboue
What houndes lyen in the floor doun
Of al this make I no mencion
But of the effecte that thynketh me best
Now comyth the poynte and herkyn if ye lyst
The sonday at nyght or day began to spring
t Whan palamon herd the larke syng
Al though it were nat day by oures two
yet song the larke and palamon right tho
With holy herte and with an high corage
Is ryseu to wende on his pilgramage
Vnto the blisful Cytherea benygne
I mene venus honourable and digne
And in her houre he walked forth apace
Vnto the lystes there her temple was
And doun he knelith and with humble chere
And with hert sore he sayde as ye shal here
Fayrest of fayre o lady myn venus
Doughter to Iouis and spouse to vlcanus
That gladdest al the mount of Citherey
For that loue that thou haddest to Adon
Haue pyte on my bytter teres smert

And take my humbly prayer to thy hert
Allas I haue no langage for to telle
The effecte ne the turment of myn helle
Myn hert may nat myn harmes bewrey
I am so sorouful that I can nat sey
But mercy lady bright that knowest wele
My thought and seest the harmes that I fele
Considre this and rewe vpon my sore
As wysly as I shal for euirmore
Emforth my myght thy true seruaunt to be
And holde warre lady alwey wath chastite
That I make myn auowe so ye me help
I kepe nat of armes for to yelpe
Ne I aske nat to morow forto haue the victory
Ne renoun in this caas ne veynglory
Of pryse of armes to blow vp and doun
But I welde fully haue possioun
Of Emely and dye in her seruice
Fynde thou the manere how and what wyse
I recche nat but it may bettre be
To haue victory of them or they of me
So that I haue my lady in myn armes
For though so be that mars be god of armes
Your vertue is so grete in heuyn aboue
That if thou lyst I shalle haue my loue
Thy temple wol I worship euirmo
And on an autre where I ryde or goo
I wol do sacrifice and fyres bete
And if ye wyl nat so my lady swete
Than pray I the to morow with a spere
That Arcite me though the herte bere
Than recche I nat whan I haue lost my lyf
Though that Arcyte wedde her to wif

This is the effect and ende of my prayer
yeue me my loue my blissed lady dere
Whan that the oryson was done of palamon
His sacrifice he did and that anone
Ful pitously with alle circumstaunces
Al telle I nat now his obseruaunces
And alle the statue of venus shoke
And made a signe wherby that he toke
That his prayer accepted was that day
For thoughe the figure shewed delay
yet wist he wele that graunted was his bone
And with gladde herte he went him home sone
The thridde oure equal that palamon
Began to venus temple for to goon
b p rose the sonne and vp rose emely
And to the temple of dyane gan hye
Her maydens that she with her thider lad
Ful redely with them the fyre they had
Thencence the clothes and the remenaunt alle
That to the sacrifice longen shalle
The hornes ful of methe as was the guyse
There lacked naught to doon her sacrifice
Smoking the temple ful of clothes fayre
This emely with hert debonayr
Her body wesshe with water in a welle
But how she did there I dar nat telle
But it be any thing in generalle
And yet it were a game for to here alle
To him that menyth wele it were no charge
But it is gode a man be at his large
Her bright here was kempt and vntressed alle
And a crowne of grene oke seryalle
Vpon her hede was set ful fayre and mete

Two fyres on the autre can ſhe bete
And did her thinges as men may beholde
In ſtate of Thebes and in bokes olde
Whan kyndled was the fyre with pytous chere
Vnto dyane ſhe ſpake as ye may here
O chaſt goddeſſe of the wode grene
To whom both heuyn and erth and ſee is ſene
Quene of the regne of pluto derke and low
Goddeſſe of maydens that my hert haſt know
Ful many a yere and woteſt what I deſyre
As kepe me fro the vengeaunce and thyn ire
That Atheon abought truly
Thaſt goddeſſe wele woteſt thou that I
Deſire to be a mayden alle my lyf
Ne neuir wol I be loue ne wyf
I am thou woteſt yet of thy company
A mayden. and loue huntyng and venery
And for to walken in the wodes wilde
And nat to be a wif and be with childe
Naught wil I know company of man
Now help me lady ſithnes thou mayſt and can
For the thre fourmes that thou haſt in the
And palamon that hath ſuche loue to me
And eke Arcite that loueth me ſo ſore
This grace I pray the withouten more
As ſend loue and peaſe bitwix them two
And fro me turne awey their hertes ſo
That al their hote loue and alle their deſire
And al their beſy turment and al their fyre
Be queynte or turned in a nother place
And if ſo be thou wil do me no grace
Or if my deſteny be ſhapen ſoo
That I ſhal nedes haue one of them two

As ſend me him that mooſt deſireth me
Beholde goddeſſe of clene chaſtite
The bytter teres that on my cheekes falle
Sithnes thou art a mayde and kepar of vs alle
My maydenhede thou kepe and wele conſerue
And whiles I lyne a mayden wol I the ſerue
The fyres brenne vpon the auters clere
Whil Emely was thus in her prayer
But ſodenly ſhe ſaw a lyght queynt
For right anone oon of the fyres queynt
And quiched a yen and after that anone
That other fyre was queynt and alle agone
And as it queynt it made a whiſtling
As doon these wete brondes in their brennyng
And at the brondes ende out ran anone
As it were droppes blody many one
For why ſhe ſo ſore agaſt was Emely
Than ſhe was almooſt mad and gan to cry
For ſhe ne wiſt what it ſignified
But only for fere thus hath ſhe cryed
And wept that it was pyte to here
And ther withalle dyane gan appere
With bow in honde right as an huntreſſe
And ſayd doughter ſtynt thyn heyneſſe
Among the goddes ay high it is affermed
And by etern worde writen and confermed
Thou ſhalt be wedded vntyl one of them two
That haue for the ſo moche care and wo
But on to whiche of them may I nat telle
Fare wele for I may no lenger duelle
The fyres whiche on myn autre brenne
Shal the declare or that thou go henne
Thyn auenture of loue as in this caas

And with that worde the arowes in the caas
Of the goddesse clateryng fast and ryng
And forth she went and made a vanysshing
For which this Emely astonyed was
And sayd what amounteth this allas
I put me vndre thy protectioun
Dyane and in thy disposicioun
And home she goth anone the next wey
This is the effecte there is no more to sey
By the next houre of mars after this
Reite vnto the temple walked is
a Of syers mars to do his sacrifice
With alle the rightes of his paynem wise
With pytous hert and high deuocioun
Right thus to Mars he sayde his orysoun
O strong god that in the regnes colde
Of trace honoured art and lordeyn hold
And hast in euery regne and euery lond
Of armes al the brydel in thy hond
And them fortunest as the list best deuyse
Accept of me my pytous sacrifice
If so be that my thought may deserue
And that my myght be worthy to serue
Thy godhede that I may be one of thyn
Than pray I the rew on my pyne
For that peyn and that hote fyre
In which thou brennest whilom for desire
Whan that thou vsedyst the beaute
Of fayre yong fresshe venus fre
And haddest her in thy armes at thy wil
And though the ones a tyme myssyl
Whan vlcanus had caught the in his laas
And fond the lygging by his wif alias

For thilke sorow that was in thyn hert
Haue routhe a swele vpon my peynes smert
I am ponyt and vnkonnynt as thou woteſt
And as I trow with loue offended moost
Than euer was any lyues creature
For she that doth me alle this wo endure
Ne recheth neuer whether I synke or flete
And wele I wote or she me mercy hete
I must with strengith wynne her in the place
And wele I wote without help and grace
Of the may nat my strenght auayle
Than help me lord to morow in my batayl
For that fyre that whylom brent the
As wele as that fyre now brenneth me
And do that I to morow haue the victory
Myn the trauayl and thyn be the glory
Thy souerayn temple wil I moost honouren
Of any place alwey and moost lauborен
In thy plesaunce and in thy craftes strong
And in thy temple I wille my baner hong
And alle the armes of my company
And euirmore vnto the day I dye
Eternly fyre I wol bifore the fynde
And che to this auowe I wil me bynde
My berd my here that hangith long a doun
That neuir yet felt offensioun
Of rasour ne of shere I wille the yeue
And be thy true seruaunt whiles I lyue
Now lord haue routhe vpon my sorowes sore
yeue me the victory I aske no more
The prayer stynt of Arcite the strong
The ryngtes that on the temple dore hong
And eke the dores clatered so fast

Of whiche arcite somwhat him agaſt
The fyres brent vpon the auters bright
That it gan al the temple for to light
A ſwete ſmel anone the grounde vp yaf
And arcite anone his hond vp gaf
And more encence in to the fyre caſt
With other rytes mo and at the laſt
The ſtatue of mars began his haubrehe rynge
And with that ſounde he herd a murmurynge
Ful low and dym and ſayd thus. victory
For whiche he paue to Mars honour and glory
And thus with ioy and hope wele to fare
Arcite anone to his ynne is faze
As fayn as foule is of the bright ſonne
And right anone ſuche ſtryf is ther begon
For that grauntyng in heuyn aboue
Betwix venus godde ſſe of loue
And mars the ſterne god armepotent
That iupiter was beſy it to ſtynt
Tyl that the pale ſaturnus the colde
That knew ſo many of auentures olde
Fond in his olde experience and arte
That he ful ſone hath pleaſed euery parte
As ſoth is ſayd elde hath gret auauntage
In elde is both wiſdome and vſage
Men may the olde oute renne but nat oute ride
Saturne anone to ſtynt ſtryf and dride
Al be it that it is ayenſt his kynde
Of al this ſtriue he can remedies fynde
My dere doughter venus quod Saturne
My cours that hath ſo wyde for to turne
Hath more power than woote any man
Myn is the drenchyng of the ſee ſo wan

Wyn is the pryſon in the derke cote
Wyn is the ſtrangelyng and banging by the throte
The murmure and the chorles rebellyng
The groynyng and the pryue enpoyſonyng
I do vengeaunce and playn correctioun
Whiles I dwelle in the ſigne of the lyoun
Wyn is the ruyne of the high halles
The fallyng of the toures and the walles
Vpon the mynour or the carpentere
I ſlough Sampſon ſhakyng the pylers
And myn been the maladyes colde
The derke treaſon and the caſtes olde
My lokyng is the fadre of peſtilence
Nowe wepe nomore I ſhal doon diligence
That palamon that is thyn own knyght
Shal haue his lady as thou him behight
And Mars ſhal kepe his knyght yet neuirtheles
Betwix you there muſt be ſomtyme peaſe
Al be ye nat of one complexioun
That cauſeth alday ſuche deuyſioun
I am thyn al redy at thy wille
Wepe nomore I wil thy luſt fulfylle
Nowe wil I ſtynt of the goddes aboue
Of Mars and venus goddeſſe of loue
And telle you al playnly as I can
The grete effecte for whiche I began
¶ Grete was the feſt in athenes that day
And eke the luſty ſeaſon of that may
Made euery wight to be in ſuche pleſaunce
That alle that monday iuſt they and daunce
And ſpenden it in venus high ſeruyſe
And becauſe that they ſholden aryſe
Erly for to ſe that grete fight

Vnto theire reſt went they at nyght
And on the morow whan day gan ſpring
Of horſe and noyſe harneys and clateryng
Ther was in hoſtelryes alle aboute
And to the paleys rode ther many a route
And lordes vpon ſtedes and palfreys
There mayſt thou ſe a deuyſyng of harneys
So vncouthe and ſo riche and wrought ſo wele
Of goldſmythrye of broudery and of ſtele
The ſheldes bright teſteres and trappoures
Golde hewen helmes haubrekes and cote armures
Lordes in paramentes on their courſers
Knyghtes of retenue and the ſquyers
Naylyng the ſperes and helmes bokelyng
Gnydyng of ſheldes with leyners laſyng
There as nede is they were nothing ydel
The fomy ſtedes on the golden brydel
Gnawing. and faſt the armerers alſo
With fyle and hamer prichyng to and fro
Yemen on fote and comyns many one
With ſhorte ſtaues thicke as they may gone
Pypes trompes naconers and clarions
That in the bataylle blowen blody ſoundes
The paleys ful of peple vp and doun
There thre there ten holdyng their queſtioun
Demyng of the Thebayn knyghtes two
Some ſayde thus ſom ſayd it ſhalbe ſo
Som held with him with the blak berd
Som with the balled ſom with the thicke herd
Som ſayde he loked grym and he wold fight
He hath a ſparth of xx pounde of wyght
Thus was the halle ful of deuynyng
Long after that the ſonne gan to ſpring

The grete Theseus that of his sleep awaked
With mynstralcy and noyse that was maked
Held yet the chambre of his paleys riche
Tyl that the thebane knyghtes bothe ylyche
Honoured were and into the paleys fet
Duke Theseus is at the wyndow set
Arayed right as he were god in trone
The peple preced thiderward ful sone
Him for to seyn and doon high reuerence
And to herkyn his best and his sentence
An herowde on a scaffold made an D
Tyl al the noyse of the peple was do
And whan he saw the peple of noyse alstyl
Thus shewed he the myghty dukes wille
The lord hath of his high discrecioun
Consídred that it were destruccioun
To gentyl blode to fighten in this wise
Of mortal batayle now in this empryse
Wherfore to shapen that they shulde nat dye
He wil his first purpos modifye
No man therfore on peyne of tosse of lyf
No mancr shotte ne pollaye ne short knyf
In the listes send or thider bringe
Ne short swerd for to stike with poynt bityng
Ne noman ne draw ne bere it be his syde
Ne noman shal vnto his felaw ryde
But one cours with a sharpe grounde spere
Foynyng if him lyst on fote him selue to were
And he that is at myschief shalbe take
And nat slayn but be brought to the stake
That shalbe ordeyned on either syde
But thider he shal by force and there abyde
And if so falle the chieftayn be take

On either syde or elles slecth his make
No lengre shal the turneyng last
God spede you go forth and ley on fast
With long swerdes and maces ley on your sylle
Goth now your wey this is the lordes wil
The voyce of peple touched the heuyn
So loude cryed they with mery steuyn
God saue suche a lord that is so gode
He willith nat distruction of blode
Up goth the trumpes and the melody
And to the listes ridyth this company
By ordenaunce throughout the cyte large
Hanged with cloth of golde and nat with sarge
Full lyke a lorde this noble duke gan ryde
These two Thebans upon either syde
And after rode the quene and Emely
And after that a nother company
Of one and other after their degre
And thus they passe through the cyte
And to the listes come they be tyme
It nas nat of the day fully pryme
Whan sette was Theseus riche on higth
Ypolita the quene and Emely
And other ladies in degrees aboute
Unto the setes preseth alle the route
And West ward through the yates vndre marte
Arcite and ehe the houndred of his parte
With baner rede is entred right anone
And in that selue moment palamon
Is vndre venus est ward in that place
With baner white and hardy chere of face
In al the worlde to seke up and doun
So euyn without any variacioun

There nere ſuche companeys tWey
For there Was none ſo Wiſe that coude ſey
That any had of other auaumtage
Of Worthyne ſſe ne eſtate ne age
So euyn Were they choſen forto geſſe
And in tWo renges feyre they them dreſſe
And Whan that their names red Were euerichoon
That in their nombre gyle Were ther none
Tho Were the yates ſhyt and cryed Was loude
Do nolW your deuour yong knyghtes proude
The heroudes left their pricking by and doun
Now ryngen trompes loude and clarioun
Ther is nomore to ſey but eſt and Weſt
In goth the ſperys ful ſadly in the reſt
In goth the ſharp ſpore in the ſyde
Ther ſeen men Who can iuſt and Who can ryde
There ſhyuerynge ſhaftes vpon ſheldes thicke
He feleth through the hart ſpoon the pryck
Vp ſpringeth ſperes tWenty fote on hight
Out goon the ſWerdys as the ſiluer bright
The helmes they to hewen and to ſhrede
Out breſt the blode With ſterne ſtremes rede
With myghty maces the bones they to briſt
He through the thickeſt of the throng can thriſt
Ther ſtomblyn ſteedys ſtrong and doWn goth al
He rolleth vndre fote as doth a bal
He foyneth on his feet With his truncheon
And he hurtleth With his hors adoun
He through the body is hurt and ſithnes take
Maugre his hede and brought to the ſtake
As forWard Was right there he muſt abyde
Anothen ſek is on that othen ſyde
And ſomtyme doth them Theſeus to reſt

Them for to refresshe and drynke if that they lyst
Ful oft a day haue the Thebans two
Togyder y met and wrought eyther wo
Vnhorsed hath eche one of them twey
Ther is no tygre in the bale of galegophey
Whey that her whelp is stolen whey it islyte
So cruel on the hunt as is Arcite
For ielous hert vpon this palamon
Ne in belmarye ther is no fel lyoun
That hunted is for angre wood
Ne of his pray desireth so the blode
As palamon to sle his foo Arcite
The ielous strokes on theire helmes byte
Oute rynneth blood on both theire sydes rede
Som tyme an end ther is of euery dede
For or the sonne vnto rest went
The strong kinge Emetrius gan hent
This palamon as he fought with Arcite
And made his swerd depe in his flesshe bite
And by the force of twenty was he take
Vnyolden and drawe to the stake
And in the rescous of this palamon
The strong kinge Ligurge is born a doun
And kinge Emetrius for alle his strenght
Is born oute of his sadyl a swerde lenght
So hit him palamon or he were take
But al for nought he was brought to the stake
His hardy hert ne myght him help nought
He must abyde whan he was caught
By force and eke by composicioun
Who soroweth now but woful palamon
That must nomore go a yen to fight
And whan that Theseus hadde seye that sight

Vnto the folke that foughten thus echone
He cryed thay hoo nomore for it is done
I wol be true iuge and nat party
Arcyte of Thebes shal haue Emely
That by his fortune hath her feyr y wonne
Anone there is a noyse of peple begon
For ioy of this so loude and high with alle
That it semed that the lystes shuld falle
What can now fayre venus done aboue
What sayeth she What doth the quene of loue
But wepith so for wantyng of her wille
Tyl that her teres in the listes fylle
She sayd I am shamed doutlesse
Saturne sayd doughter holde thy peas
Mars hath his wille the knyght hath his bone
And by my hede thou shalt be eased sone
The trompettes with the lowde mynstralsye
The heroudes that ful loude yelle and crye
Been in their ioy for the wel of dane Arcite
But herkneth me and stynt noyes alite
Whiche a myracle there befelle anone
This fyers Arcite hath his helme of done
And on a courser for to shewe his face
He pryked endlong the large place
Lokyng vpward vnto this Emely
And she ageyn him cast a frendly eye
And was alle in his chere as in his hert
Oute of the grounde a fyre infernal stert
From Pluto sent at the request of saturne
For whiche his horse for fere gan to turne
And lept a syde and foundred as he lepe
And or that Arcite may take hepe
He pight him on the pomel of his hede

That in the place he lay as he were dede
His breest to brosten with the sadyl bow
As blake he lay as any cool or crowe
So was the blode ronne in his face
Anone he was borne oute of the place
With herte sore to Theseus paleys
Tho was he corupn oute of his harneys
And in a bedde brought ful fayre and blyue
For he was yet in memory and alyue
And alwey crying after Emely
Duke Theseus with alle his company
Is come home to Athenes his cyte
With alle blis and grete solennyte
Al be it that this auenture was falle
He nolde nat discomforte them alle
Ne sayd ne he that Arcite shuld nat dye
He shulde be heled of his malady
And of a nother thing they wer sayn
That of them alle ther was noon slayn
Alle were they sore hurt and namely one
That with a spere was thrilled the breest bone
The other wowndes and the brode armes
Som had salues and some had charmes
Fermacyes of herbes and ne sane
They dronken for they wold their lyues hane
For whiche this noble duke as he wel can
Comforteth and honoured euery man
And made reuel al the long nyght
Unto the straunge lordes as was right
Ne there was holden no discomfytyng
But as a iustes or a tourneyng
For there was holden no discomfiture
For sayling nys but auenture

Ne to beladde by force vnto the stake
Vnpeldy and with twenty knyghtes take
One pryson allone without mo
And harped forth by arme fote and too
And eke his stede dryuen forth with staues
With fote men both yemen and eke knaues
It nas y retted him no vilony
There may noman clepe it cowardrye
For whiche anone duke Theseus let crye
To stynten alle rancour and enuye
The degre aswel in one syde as in other
And either syde lyke as other brother
And yaf them giftes after their degre
And fully held a fest daies thre
And conueyed the kinges worthyly
Out of his towne a iourney largely
And home went euery man the right wey
There was nomore but farwele haue gode day
O Of this batayle I wil nomore endite
But speke of palamon and arcite
Swelleth the brest of Arcite and the sore
Encreseth at his hert ay more and more
The clotered blode for any lechecraft
Corrupteth and in his bouke is laft
That neither veyne blode ne vencusynge
Ne drinke of herbes may be his helpynge
The vertue expulsyf or anymal
Fro that vertue y cleped natural
Ne may the venym voyde ne expelle
The pypes of his longes gan to swelle
And euery lacert in his breest adoun
Is shent with venym and corrupcioun
Him gayneth nothing for to gete his lyf

Vompyte vpward and doun ward layatyf
Al is to bresten thilke regioun
Nature hath in him no dompnacioun
And certaynly there nature wil nat wirche
Fare wele phisyke go here the man to the chirche
This is al and som Arcite must dye
For whiche he sendith after Emely
And palamon that was his cosyn dere
Than sayd he thus as ye shal after here
Nat may the wofull spyret in myn hert
Declare a poynte of al my sorowes smert
To you my lady that I loue moost
But biqueth the seruice of my goost
To you abouen euery creature
Sithnes that my lyf may no lenger dure
Allas the woo allas the peynes strong
That I for you haue suffred and so long
Allas the deth allas my Emely
Allas the departyng of oure company
Allas my hertes quene allas my wif
Myn hertes lady ender of my lyf
What is this worlde What asketh men to haue
Now with his loue now colde in his graue
Alone withouten any company
Fare wele my swete foo my Emely
And softe take me in youre armes twey
For the loue of god and herkeneth what I say
I haue here with my cosyn palamon
Had strif and rancor many a day agone
For loue of you and of my jelousye
And Jupiter so wisely my soule gye
To speken of a seruaunt propirly
With circumstaunces alle truly

That is to seyn trouthe honour and knyghthede
Wisdom humblesse estate and high kynred
Fredom and alle that longith to that arte
So Jupiter haue of my soule parte
As in this worlde right now knowe I none
So worthy to be loued as palamon
That serueth you and wol do alle his lyf
And if that euer ye shal be a wif
Forgetteth nat Palamon the gentilman
And with that worde his speche fayle gan
For fro his fete vnto his breest was come
The colde of dethe that hath him ouercome
And yet more ouer for in his armes two
The vytalle strengith is lost and al ago
Only the intelectys withouten more
That dwellith in his hert syke and sore
Gan fayle whan the herte felith deth
Dusshith his eyen to and fayleth his breth
But on his lady yet cast he his eye
His last worde was mercy Emely
His spyret chaunged the hous and went there
As I cam neuer I can nat telle where
Ther I stynt I am nat depynester
Of soules fynde I nat in this regystre
Ne me lyst the opunyons to telle
Of them thougth they writen where they dwelle
Arcyte is colde there mars his soule gye
Now wol I speke forth of Emely
Shrygth Emely and owleth palamon
And Theseus his suster tok anone
Swonyng and bare hir fro the cors away
What helpith it to tary forth the day
To telle how she wept both eue and morow

For in ſuche caas wemen haue ſuche ſorow
Whan that their husbondes be fro them goo
That for the more part they ſorowen ſo
Or elles falle in ſuche a malady
That at the laſt certaynly they dye
Infinyte been the ſorowes and the teres
Of olde folke and folke of tendre yeres
In al the toun for deth of this Theban
For him ther wepith bothe childe and man
So grete wepyng was ther none certayn
Whan Ector was brought alle freſſhe y ſlayn
To troye. allas the pyte that was there
Scratchyng of cheekes rentyng eke of here
Why woldeſt thou be dede theſe wymmen crye
And baddeſt golde ynough and Emely
No man myght glade Theſeus
Sauyng his olde fader egeus
That knew this worldes tranſmutacioun
As he hadde ſeen it chaunge bp and doun
Joy after wo and wo after gladneſſe
And ſhewed him enſample and lyknesſe
Right as ther deyde neuer man qnod he
That he ne lyued in erth in ſom degre
Right ſo ther lyued neuer man he ſayde
In alle this worlde that ſomtyme he ne deyde
This worlde is but a throughfare ful of wo
And we be pylgrames paſſyng to and fro
Deth is an ende of euery worldes ſore
And ouer al this yet ſayde he mekyl more
To this effecte ful wiſely to enhorte
The peple that they ſhulde them recomforte
Duke Theſeus With alle his beſy cure
Caſt now where that the ſepulture

Of gode Arcite may best y maked be
And eke moost honourable in his degre
And at the last he tolde conclusioun
That there first Arcite and palamon
Hadden for loue the batayle them bitwene
That in that selue groue swete and grene
There as he hadde his amorous desires
His complaynt and for loue his hote fyres
He wolde make a fyre in whiche the office
Funeralle he myght fully accomplice
And comaunded anone to hacke and to hewe
The okes olde and ley them on a rewe
In culpyns wele arayed for to brenne
His officers with swyft feet they renne
And ryden anone at his comaundment
And after this Theseus hath sent
After a bere and he it ouer spradde
With clothes of golde the richest that he hadde
And of the same sote he clothed Arcite
Upon his hondes his gloues white
And on his hede a crowne of laurer grene
And in his honde a swerde ful bright and kene
He layde him bare the visage on the bere
Therwith he wipte that pyte was to here
And for the peple sholde se him alle
Whan it was day he brought him in the halle
That roreth on the cryng and the soun
Tho cam this wofull theban palamoun
With flotered berd and rugged asshe heres
In cloces blake dropped al with teres
And passing other of wepyng Emely
The rewfulleste of alle the company
And in asmoche as the seruice shuld be

The more noble and riche in his degre
Duke Theseus let thre stedes forth bring
That trapped were in stele al glytering
And couered with the armes of Arcite
And eke vpon the stedes grete and white
Ther sattyn folke of which one bare his shelde
Another a spere vpon his shulders helde
The thridde bare with him his bow turkeys
Of brend golde was the caas and the harneys
And ryden forth a paas with sorousful chere
Toward the grove as ye shal after here
The noblest of the grehes that there were
Vpon ther bakes carpeden the here
With stacke paas and eyen rede and wete
Throughout the cyte by the master strete
That spradde was al with blake and wondre hye
Right of the same is the strete y wrye
Vpon the right honde went olde egeus
And on that other syde duke Theseus
With besselles of golde in their hond ful fyne
And ful of hony mylke blode and wyne
Eke palamon with ful grete company
And after that cam Wofful Emely
With fyre in honde as was that tyme the guyse
To do the office of the funeralle seruice
High laboure and ful grete apparelling
Was at the seruyce of the fyre making
That with his grene toppe the heuyn raught
And twenty fadom of brede the armes straught
This is to sey the bowes were so brode
Of strawe first was leyde many a lode
But how the fyre was made vpon an hight
Ne eke the names how the trees hight

As ook fyrre byrche asshe alder holme populer
Wayple thorn beche aspe box chesteyn lynd laurer
Wilowe elme plane hasil and Whyppultre
How they were felled shal nat be tolde for me
Ne how the gotes rennyn by and doun
Disherpted of their habitacioun
In Whiche they woned in rest and pease
Nymphes faunes and a madrides
Ne how the bestes and the byrdes alle
Fledden for fere whan the wode gan falle
Ne how the grounde agast was of the light
That was nat wont to se the sonne bright
Ne how the fyre was couched first with stre
And than with drye stickes cloven on thre
And than with grene wode and spycery
And than with cloth of golde and with perry
And garlondes hanging with many a floure
The myrre the encence with suete odouze
Ne how Arcite lay among alle this
Ne what richesse aboute his body there is
Ne how that Emely as was the guyse
Put in the fyre of funeralle seruice
Ne how she swowned whan made was the fyre
Ne what she spache ne what was her desire
Ne what Jewelles men in the fyre cast
Whan that the fyre was grete and brenned fast
Ne how som cast their shelde and som their spere
And of their westmentes Whiche that they were
And cuppes ful of mylke and blode
In to the fyre that brent as it were wode
Ne how the greues With an huge route
Thryes ryden al the fyre aboute
Upon the left honde With an high shoutyng

And thryes with theire speres clatering
And thryes hou the ladies gan cry
Ne hou that led was homward Emely
Ne hou Arcite is brent to asshen colde
Ne hou the lyche wakes were y holde
That ilke nyght ne how the grekes pley
The wake pleyes ne kepe I nat to say
Which wrastelith best naked with oyle anoynt
Ne who that bare him best at the poynt
I wil nat telle alle how they gon
Home to Athenes when the play is doon
But shortly to the poynt than wol I wende
And make of my long tale an ende
By proces and by lengith of certayn yeres
Al stynt is the mornyng and the cheres
Of grekes by one generalle assent
Than semeth me ther was a parlement
At Athenes upon a certayn poynte and caas
And amonge the which poyntes spoken was
To haue with certayn countrees alyaunce
And haue fully of Thebans obeysaunce
For which this noble Theseus anon
Leet send after gentyl palamon
Unwyst of him what was the cause and why
But in his blake clothes sorowfully
He cam at his comaundement an hye
Tho Theseus sent for Emely
Whan they were set and hust was alle the place
And Theseus abyden hath a space
Er any worde cam fro his wise breest
His eyen set he there as him lyst
And with a sadde visage he sitted stylle
And after that right thus he sayd his wylle

The first mouer of the cause aboue
Whan he first made the fayre cheyne of loue
Grete Was the effecte and high Was his entent
Wele Wist he Why and What therof he ment
For With that fayre cheyne of loue he bond
The fyre the eyre the Water and the lond
In certayn bondes that may nat fle
The same prynce and that mouer quod he
Hath stablisshed in this Wrecched Worlde adoun
Certayn daies and duracioun
To alle that is engendred in this place
Ouer the Whiche day they may nat passe
Al may they yet tho daies abrigge
Ther nedith nat auctorite to legge
For it is proued by experience
But that me lyst to declare my sentence
Than may Wele men by this ordre discerne
That thylke mouer stable is and eterne
Wel may men knowe but it be a fool
That euery party is deryued fro his hole
For nature hath nat take his begynnyng
Of one part or of a cantel of a thing
But of a thing that parfyte is and stable
Descending so tyl it be corrumpable
And therfore for his Wise purueaunce
He hath so Wele besette his ordenaunce
That speces of thinges and progessiouns
Shulden endure by successiouns
And nat eterne Withoute any lye
This mayst thou understonde and se at eye
Lo the oke that hath so long a norysshing
Fro the tyme that it first gynneth to spring
And hath so long lyf as ye may see

yet at the laſte Waſted is the tre
Conſidreth eke hou the hard ſtoon
Wndre our feet on Whiche We tradde and goon
yet Waſtith it as it lieth by the Wey
The brode ryuer ſomtym Wexith drey
The grete townes ſe We Wane and Wende
Than ye ſe that alle thing hath ayende
Of man and Woman ſe We Wele alſo
That nedes in one of theſe termes two
This is to ſayn in youthe or elles in age
He moot be dede the king as ſhal a page
Som in his bedde ſom in the depe ſee
Som in the large feld as men nay ſe
Ther helpith naught for alle goon that ilke Wey
Than may I ſay alle thing mot nedes deye
What maketh this but Jupiter the king
That is prince and cauſe of al thing
Conuertyng al vnto his propre Wille
For Whiche it is deryued ſoth to telle
And here agaynes no creature alyue
Of no degre auayleth for to ſtryue
Than it is Wiſdom as thinketh me
To make vertue of neceſſite
And take it Wele that We may nat eſcheWe
And namely that to vs alle is due
And Who ſo grutchithought he doth foly
And rebel is to him that al may gye
And certaynly a man hath mooſt honoure
To dyen in his mooſt excellent floure
Whan he is fyne of his gode name
Than hath he do his frende ne him no ſhame
And gladder ought his frende be of his deth
Whan With honour ſo vp yolden is his breth

Than Whan his name appalled is for age
For alle forpeten is than his bassclage
Than is it best as for a Worthy fame
To dyen Whan a man is best of name
The contrary for alle this is Wilfulnes
Why grutge We Why haue We heuynesse
That gode Arcite of cheualry the flour
Departed is With ducty and honour
Out of the foule pryson of this lyf
Why gruched his cosyn and his Wyf
Of his Welefare that loueth him so Wele
Can he them thanke nay god Woot neuir a dele
That bothe his soule and eke them offendee
And yet they may their lustes nat amende
What may I conclude of this longe sery
But after Wo I rede vs be merry
And thanke Jupiter of alle his grace
And or We departen from this place
I rede that We make of sorowes two
O parfyte ioy lastyng euirmo
And loketh now Where moost sorow is ynne
There Wil I first amende and begynne
Duster quod he this is my ful assent
With alle the auyse of my parlement
That gentyl palamon your owyn knyght
That serueth you With hert and myght
And euir hath do sithen ye first him knew
That ye shal of your grace on him rewe
And take him for husbond and for lorde
Lene me your hond for this is oure accorde
Let see now of your Womanly pyte
He is a kynges brother sonne parde
And though he Were a poure bachelor

Sithen he hath serued you so many a yere
And hadde for you so grete aduersite
It must be considred leuyth me
For gentyl mercy ought to passe ryght
Than sayd he thus to palamon the knyght
I trow ther nedith litel sermonynge
To make you assent to this thing
Cometh nere and take youre lady by the honde
And thus of them bothe was made the bond
That hight matromonye or mariage
By alle the counseyl of the baronage
And thus with alle blisse and melody
Hath palamon wedded Emely
And god that alle this worlde hath wrought
Sente him his loue that dere hadde bought
For now is palamon in al wele
Lyuyng in blisse in richesse and in hele
And Emely him loueth so tenderly
And he her serueth agayn so gentylly
That ther was no worde them bitwene
Of Jelousy or of any other tene
Thus endith palamon and Emely
And god saue alle this company

Here endith the knyghtes tale
And here begynneth the Myllers prologue

WHan that the knyght had thus his tale told
In alle the company nas there yong ne old
That he ne sayd it was a noble story
And worthy to be drawe in memory
And namely the gentylles euerichone
Oure hooste lough and swore so mot I gone

This goth aright vnboheled is the male
Let se now who shal tel another tale
For truly the game is wele begonne
Now telle ye sir monke if that ye konne
Somwhat to quyte the knyghtes tale
The Myller that for dronken was al pale
To that vnnethes vpon his horse he sat
He nolde auale nother hode ne hat
Ne abyde noman for his curtesy
But in pylates voyce he gan to cry
And swore by armes blode and bones
I can a noble tale for the nones
With whiche I wol now quyte the knyghtes tale
Our hoost sawe that he was dronke of ale
And sayde abyde Robyn leue brother
Som bettre man shal telle first another
Abyde and lete vs werke thryftely
By coknes soule quod he that nyl nat I
For I wil spekē or elles go my wey
Our hoost answerd telle on a deuyl wey
Thou art a fool thy wyt is ouercome
Now herkneth quod the Myller alle and some
But first I make a protestacioun
That I am dronke I knowe by my soun
And therfore if I mys spekē or sey
Wyte it the ale of Southwerke I you pray
For I wol telle a legende and a lyf
Bothe of a carpenter and of his wyf
How that a clerke hath set the wrightes cappe
The reue answerd and sayd stynt thy clappe
Let be thy lewde dronkyn harlottrye
It is a synne and eke a grete foly
To apeyre any man or him defame

And ek bring wyues in ſuche name
Thou mayſt ynough of other thinges ſayn
This dronken Myller ſpake ful ſone ageyn
And ſayd o leue brother Oſwolde
Who hath no wif he is no cokecolde
But I ſay nat therfore that thou art one
There been gode wyues many one
Why art thou angry with my tale now
I haue a wif parde aſwele as thou
yet nolde I nat for the oxen in my plow
Take vpon me more than ynow
As deme of my ſelue that I were one
I wol beleue wele that I am none
An huſbonde ſhulde nat be inquyſityf
Of goddes priuyte ne of his wif
So he may fynde goddes fuſon there
Of the remenaunt nedith nat to enquere
What ſholde I more ſay but this myllere
He nolde his wordes for no man forbere
But tolde his chorles tale in this manere
Me at thinketh that I ſhal reherſe it here
And therfore euery gentyl wight I pray
Demeth nat for goddes loue that I ſay
Of euylentent but that I muſt reherce
Their tales al be they bettre or werce
Or elles falſen ſom of my matere
And therfore who ſo lyſtith nat to here
Turne ouer the leef and chooſe a nother tale
For he ſhal fynde ynow both grete and ſmale
Of hiſtorialle thing that toucheth gentylneſſe
And eke moralite and holyneſſe
Blameth nat me if that ye chooſe amys
The Myller is a chorle ye knaw wele this

So is the reue and ehe othez mo
And harlotrye they tolde bothe two
Auyseth you and put me oute of blame
And ehe mey shal nat make erneſt of game

Here begynneth the mylleꝛs tale



Whilom thez was dwellinꝝ in Oxenforde
A riche ꝝnof that ꝝeſtes hadde to boꝛde
And of his craft was he a carpentre
With him thez was a poure ſcoleꝛ
Had lerned art but al his fantaſye
Was turned to lere aſtrologye
And coude a certayn of concluſiouns
To demyn by interꝛogaciouns
If that men aſked him certeyn houres
Whethez they ſhuld haue drought oꝛ ſhoures
Oꝛ if that men aſked him what ſhulde befalle
Of euery thinꝝ I may nat reken alle

This clerke was cleped hend nycolas
Of derne loue he coude and of solas
And therto he was sly and ful pryue
And lyke a mayden meke for to see
A chambre hadde he in that hostelrye
Alone with oute any compayny
Ful fetously y dight with herbes sote
And he himself was swete as is the rote
Of lycorys or of any cete wale
His almegest his bokes grete and smale
His astrolagye longing for his arte
His augrym stones ley fayre a part
On shelues couched at his beddes hed
His presse y couered with a folding red
And alle aboue there lay a gay sautrye
On which he made anyghtes melodye
So swetely that al the chambre rong
And Angelus ad virginem he song
And after that he song the kynges note
Ful often blissed was his mery throte
And this swete clerke his tyme spent
After his frendes fyndyng and his rent
This carpentre hadde wedded new a wif
Which that he loued more than his lyf
Of xviii yere she was of age
Jelous he was and held her narow in cage
For she was wylde and yong and he was olde
And demed him selue lyke to be a cokecolde
He knew nat caton for his wyt was rude
That badde a man wed his symylitude
Men shulde wedde after their estate
For youth and age been often at debate
But sithen he was fallen in the snare

He must endure as other folke his care
Fayre was his yong wif and ther withalle
As any wesel her body gent and smalle
A seynt she wered barred alle of silke
A barmecloth as white as morow mylke
Upon her lendes with fulle many a gore
White was her smoke and broden alle bifore
And eke behinde on her coler aboute
Of coleblake sylke within and eke without
The tapettes of her white voluper
Were of the same sute of the coler
Her syklet brode of silke and set fulhye
And sikerly she hadde a likerous eye
Ful smaley pulled were her browes two
And they were bent and blake as any sloo
She was moche more blisful on to se
Than is the newe pere jenet tre
And softer than is the wolle of the weder
And by her girdel hangeth a purs of leder
Tarsalet with sicke and perled with laton
In alle this worlde to seke up and doun
There is noman so wise that coude thinche
So jay a pupelot or so praty a wynche
Fulle brighter was she shynyng of her hue
Than in the toure the noble forged new
But of her song it was as loude and yern
As any swalow sittyng in the bern
Therto she coude skippe and make game
As any kydde or calf folowing his dame
Her mouthe was swete as bragget or meth
Or hoorde of apples leyde on the hay or heth
Wynsyng she was as is a ioly colt
Long as a mast and up right as a bolt

A broche she bare vpon her low coler
As brode as is the boos of a bokeler
Her shoen were laced on her legges hye
She was a pryme rolle a pygges nye
For any lorde to liggen in his bed
Or yet for any gode yeman to wedde
Now syre and eft syre so befel the caas
That on a day this hend Nicholas
Fyl with this yong wif to rage and to pley
Whiles that her husbond was at Oseney
As clerkes be ful subtil and ful queynte
And prively he caught her by the queynte
And sayd y wys but if I haue my wille
For derne loue of the lemman I spyl
And held her hard by the shanke bones
And sayd lemman loue me alle at ones
Or I wol dye al so god me saue
And she sprong as a colt doth in the traue
And with her hede she writh fast awey
She sayde I wol nat kysse the by my fay
Why let be quod she let be Nicholas
Or I wol cry oute harrow and alas
Do way your hondes for your curtesy
This Nicholas gan mercy for to cry
And spake so fayre and profered her so fast
That she her loue graunted him at the last
And swore her othe by seint Thomas of kent
That she wolde be at his comaundement
Whan that she may her leyser wele espye
Myn husbond is so ful of iclousye
That but ye wayte wele and be pryue
I wote right wele I nam but dede quod she
ye must be ful derne as in this caas

Nay therof care the nat quod Nicholas
Lytherly a clerke hath beseed his while
But if he coude a Carpenter begyle
And thus they been accorded and y sworn
To wayte a tyme as I haue tolde biforn
Whan Nicholas hadde do thus euerydele
And thacked hez aboute the lends wele
He kyste hez swete and toke his sawtrye
And pleyed fast and made melodye
Than fel it thus that to the parisshe chirche
Cristes own werkes for to wyrche
This gode wif went on an holyday
Hez forhede shone as bright as ony day
So was it washt whan she leet hez werke
Now was of the chirche a parisshe clerke
The whiche that was y cleped Absolon
Crulled was his here and as the golde it shone
And strutedas a fan large ant brode
Ful streight and euyn lay his ioly shode
His rode was rede his eyen gray as goos
With powles wyndowes corueu in his shoes
In hoses rede he went fulle fetously
y clad de he was ful smalle and fetously
Alle in a kyrtel of a light waget
Ful fayre and thicke by the poyntes set
And therupon he hadde a gay surplice
As white as is the blossom on the ryse
A mery childe he was so god me saue
Wele coude he leten blode and clippe and shaue
And make a chartez of lond and a quictaunce
In twenty maners coude he trippe and daunce
After the scole of Oxenford tho
And with his legges cast to and fro

And pley songes on a smalle rebyble
Therto he song somtyme a loude quynyble
And as wele coude he pley on his getern
In alle the toun nas brewe house no tauern
That he ne visited with his solace
There as any gayland tapster was
But soth to sey he was somdele shweymous
Of fartyng and of speche daungerous
This absolon that iolyf was and gay
Goth with a censoure on the holyday
Sensyng the wyues of the parysshe fast
And many a louely loke on them he cast
And namely on this carpenters wyf
To loke on her him thought a mery lyf
She was so propyr swete and ek lyberous
I dar wele say if she hadde be a mous
And he a cat he wolde her hent anone
This parisshe clerke this ioly absolon
Hath in his hert suche a loue longing
That of no wif toke he non offring
For curtesy he sayde he wolde non
The mone whan it was nyght bright shone
And absolon his gytern hadde y take
For paramours he thought for to wake
And forth he goth iolyf and amerous
Tyl he cam to the Carpenters house
A litel after cokes hadde y crowe
And dressed him vp by the shot wyndowe
That was vpon the Carpenters walle
He singith in his voyce gentyl and smalle
Now dere lady if thy wyl be
I pray yow that ye wil thinke on me
Ful wele accordyng to his gyterynge

This carpenter awoke and herde him ſing
And ſpake vnto his wif and ſayde anon
What alyſon herſt thou nat abſolon
That chaunteth thus vndre oure boures walle
And ſhe anſuerd her huſbond therwith alle
yes god woot John I here it euerydele
This paſſith forth what wille ye but than wele
From day to day this ioly abſolon
So wolweth her that he is wo begoon
He waketh alle the nyght and alle the day
He kempt his lockes brode and made them gay
He wolweth her by meanes and brocage
And ſwore he wolde be her owyn page
He ſyngeth brokyng as a nyghtyngale
He ſent aftir pyment methe and ſpyced ale
And wafres pypyng hote of the glede
And for ſhe was of toun he profered mede
For ſom folke wol dye for richeſſe
And ſom for ſtrokes and ſom for iolyneſſe
Som tyme he ſhewith his luſtynes and maſtrye
He pleyeth herodes vpon a ſcaffelt hye
But what auayleth him as in this caas
So loued ſo this hend Nicholas
That abſolon may blow the buckes horn
He ne hadde for his labour but a ſcorn
And thus ſhe maketh of abſolon her ape
And al his ernest turneth tyl a Jape
Ful ſoth is this prouerbe it is no lye
Men ſay right thus alwey the nyght ſlye
Maketh the fer leef for to be lothe
For though that abſolon be wood or wrothe
Bicauſe that he fer was from her ſight
This nyght Nicholas ſtode in his light

Now here the wele thou hende Nicholas
For absolone may wayle and synge allas
And so befel it that on a saturday
This carpenter was goon tyl Oseney
And clerke hende Nicholas and alysoun
Accorded be fully to this conclusioun
That Nicholas shal shapen hem a wyle
This sely ielous husbond to begyle
And if so be the game went a right
She sholde slepe in his armes alle nyght
For this was hir desire and his also
And right anone Withoute Wordes mo
This nycholas nolenger Wolde tary
But doth fulle soft in to his chambre carye
Bothe mete and drinke for a day or twey
And to hir husbond badde hir for to sey
If that he asked after Nicholas
She shold say she nyst Where he Was
Of alle that day she saw him nat With eye
She troweth that he is in som maladye
For that no crye hir mayde coude him calle
He nolde aunsuer for nothing myght falle
This passith forth alle the saturday
That nycholas stylle in his chambre ley
And ete and slepe or dyd What him lyst
Tyl sonday that the sonne goth to rest
This sely carpenter hath grete meruayle
Of nycholas or What myght him ayle
And sayd I am adradde by seynt Thomas
It stondith nat a right With Nicholas
God shelde it that he dyed sodenly
This Worlde is now fulle tykel sykerly
I saWe a corps to day bore to the chirche

That now on monday last I ſawe him wirche
Go vp quod he vnto his knaue anone
Clepe at the doze and knocke with a ſtone
Lone how it is and telle me boldly
This knaue goth vp ful ſturdely
And at the chambre doze while that he ſtode
He cryed and knocked as he were wood
What how what do ye maſter Nicholay
How may ye ſlepen al the long day
But alle for naught he herd nat a worde
An hool ful low he ſond vpon a bord
There as the cat was wont in for to crepe
And at the hole he loked in ful depe
Tyl at the laſt he hadde of him a ſight
This nycholas ſat gaping euer vp right
As he hadde kyked on the newe mone
Adoun he goth and tolde his maſter ſone
In what aray he ſawe this ilke man
This carpenter to bliſſe him began
And ſayd help vs ſeint frideſwyde
A man wote lytel what him ſhal betyde
This man is falle in with his aſtronomy
In ſom woodneſſe or in ſom agonye
I thought ay wele how it ſholde be
Men ſholde nat knaw of goddes pryuyte
Ye blessed be alwey a lewde man
That naught vnt only his beleue can
So ferd another clerke with aſtronomy
He walked in the feldes for to prye
Vpon the ſterres what ther ſholde befalle
Tyl he was in a marlepit y falle
He ſaw nat. but yet by ſeint Thomas
Me reweth ſore of hend Nicholas

He ſhalbe rated of his ſtudiyng
If that I may by ieſu heuyn king
Gete me a ſtaf that I may vnderſpore
While that thou Robyn heuyſt of the dore
He ſhalle oute of his ſtudiyng as I geſſe
And to the chambre dore he gan him dreſſe
His knaue was a ſtrong chorle for the nones
And by the haſpe he haf it vp at onys
In to the flore the dore fel anone
This nycholas ſat ay as ſtylle as ſtone
And euir gaped vp ward in the eyre
This carpentere wende that he were in diſpeyre
And bent him by the ſhulders myghtyly
And ſhoke him harde and cryed ſpetouſly
What nycholay what how loke a doun
Awake and thinke on criſtes paſſioun
I crouche the frotlys and fro wightes
Therwith the nyghtſpel ſayde he anone rightes
On foure halues on the houſe aboute
And on the threſſhelde of the dore without
Ieſu criſt and ſeint benedight
Blyſſe this houſe from euery wicked wight
For nyghtes berry the wight pater noſter
Where woneſt thou ſeynt petyrs ſuſtre
And at the laſt this hende nycholas
Gan for to ſigh ſore and ſayde allas
Shal alle this worlde be loſte eſt ſones now
This carpenter aunſwerd what ſayeſt thou
What thinke on god as we do men that ſwynke
This nycolas aunſwerd fette me drynke
And after wil I ſpeke to the in pryuete
Of certayn thinges that touchen me and the
I wil it telle none other man certayn

This carpentere goth doun and cometh ageyn
And brought of myghty ale a large quarte
And when eche of them hadde dronke his part
This nycholas his doze faste shette
And doun the carpentez be him he set
He sayd John myn hoost leef and dere
Thou shalt vpon thy trouthe swere me here
That to no wight thou shalt this counsel wrey
Foz it is cristes counseyl that I sey
And if thou telle it may thou azt forloze
Foz this vengeaunce thou shalt haue therfoze
That if thou wrey it may thou shalt be wode
Nay crist forbede it foz his derzy blode
Quod tho this selv may I am no blabbe
Ne though I say I am nat leef to gabbe
Say what thou wilt I shal it neuz telle
To childe ne wif be him that harowed helle
Now John quod nycholas I wil nat lye
I haue founde it in myn astrologye
As I haue loked in the mone bright
That now a monday next a quartyz nyght
Shalle fal a rayn and that so wilde and wode
That half so grete was neuz noes flode
This worlde he sayde in lesse than an houre
Shal alle be dreynt so hydous is the shoure
Thus shal mankynd drenche and lese theiz lyf
This carpentere ansswerd allas my wyf
And shal she drenche allas my alisoun
Foz sorow of this he felle almoost a doun
And sayd is thez no remedy in this caas
Why yes foz god quod hend nycholas
If thou wilt worke after loze and rede
Thou mayst nat worke after thyn own hede

For thus sayeth Salamon that was ful trewe
Worke alle by counseyl and thou shalt nat rewe
And if thou worke wylt by gode counseyl
I vndertake Withouten mast or sayle
yet shal I haue hey and the and me
Hast thou nat herd how saued was Noe
Whan that oure lord hadde warned him biforn
That al the worlde with Water sholde be lorn
yes quod this carpentere ful yore ago
Thou hast nat herd quod nycholas also
The sorow of noe With his fela Wship
Or that he myght get his wif to ship
Him hadde he leuer I dar Wele vndertake
At that tyme than alle his Wedders blake
That she had hadde a ship hey selue alone
And therfore Wotest thou What is best to done
This asheth hast and of any hasty thing
Wey may nat preche ne make taryyng
Anon go get vs fast into this Inne
A kneddyng trough or elles a hymelyn
For eche of vs but loke that they be large
In Whiche We may swymmen as in a barge
And haue therin vytaile suffisaunt
But for one day fy on the remanaunt
The Water shal a slake and go a Wey
Aboute pryme vpon the next day
But Robyn may nat Wyt on this thy knaue
Ne eke thy mayden gylle I may nat saue
Aske nat Why for though thou aske me
I Wyl nat telle goddes pryuete
It suffiseth the but if thy Wyt be madde
To haue as grete a grace as Noe hadde
Thy Wif shal I Wele saue oute of doute

Go now thy wey and spede the here aboute
But whan thou hast for the and her and me
ygoten bs thies kneddingtubbes thre
Than shalt thou hong them in the roof ful hye
That noman of oure purueaunce espye
And whan thou thus hast done as I haue seyd
And hast oure bytayl fayre in them y leyd
And eke an axe to smyte the corde a two
Whan that the water cometh that we may go
And breke an hole an high bpon the gable
In to the gardeyn ward ouer the stable
That we may frely passe forth oure way
Whan that the grete shoure is passed away
Than shal we swymme as merely I vndertake
As doth the white doke after the drake
Than wol I clepe how alison how John
Be mery for the flode wil passe anone
And thou wilt seyn hayle maysters Nicholay
Gode morow I se the wele for it is day.
And than shal we be lordes alle oure lyue
Of alle the worlde as noe and his wif
But of o thing I warne the full right
Be wele auysed on that ilke nyght
Whan we be entred into the shippe bord
That one of bs ne speke nat a word
Ne clepe ne cry but be in his prayer
For it is goddes own hest dere
Thy wif and thou must hange fer a twynne
For that betwixt you twey shal be no synne
No more in lokyng than there shal in dede
This ordenaunce is sayde go god the spede
To morow at nyght when folke be alle a slepe
In to oure kneddingtubbes wyl we crepe

And sittyn there abydinge goddes grace
Go now thy wey I haue no lengere space
To make of this no lengere sermonynge
Wen say thus send the wise and say no thing
Thou art so wise it nedith the nat to teche
God saue ouer lyf and that I the beseche
This sely carpentere goth forth his wey
Ful ofte he sayd allas and wela wey
But to his wif he tolde his pryuyte
And she was ware and knewe it bet than he
What alle this queynt cast was for to sey
But natheles she ferd as she wolde dey
And sayd allas go forth thy wey anone
Help vs to scape or we be dede echoon
I am thy true herry wedded wif
Go dere spouse and helpe to saue oure lyf
Lo whiche a gret thing is affectioun
Wen may dye alday of ymaginacioun
So depe may impressioun be take
This sely carpentere begynneth quake
Him thinketh verely that he may se
Noyes flode come walowing as the see
To drenchen alisoun his hony dere
He wepith waileth and maketh sory chere
He syghed with may a sory swough
He goth and getteth him a kneding trough
And after that a tub and a kemelyn
And pryuely he sent them to his Inne
And hange them in the rofe in pryuete
His owyn hond he made ledders thre
To clymbyn by the renges and the stalkes
Vn to the tubbes hanging in the balkes
And them vitayleth both trough and tubbe

With brede and chese and gode ale in a Jub
Suffisyng right ynow as for one day
But or he hadde made alle that araye
He sent his knaue and eke his Wenche also
Vpon his erond to london for to go
And on the monday When it drew to nyght
He shytte his doze Without candel light
And dressed al thing as it sholde be
And shortly vp they clomben alle thre
They sytten styl wele a furlong wey
Now pater noster clum sayd Nicholaye
And clum sayde John and clum sayd alyson
This carpentre sayd his deuocioun
And stylle he sittyth and byddith his prayer
Awaytyng on the rayn if he it here
The dede sleepe for wery besynesse
Fyl on this Carpenter right as I gesse
Aboute curfue tyme or lytel more
For trauayl of his gooste he groneth sore
And eft he rowtyth for his hede mys lay
Doun of the ledder stalketh nycholay
And Alisoun ful soft doun she spedde
Without Wordes mo they go to the bedde
There as the carpenter Was Wont to lye
There Was the reuel and the melodye
And thus lieth alison and Nicholas
In besynesse of myrth and in solas
Tyl that the belle of laudes gan to ryng
And freres in the chaunce gan to syng
This parisshe clerke this amerous Absolon
That is for loue alwey so wo begon
Vpon the monday Was at Oseney
With company him to disporte and pley

And aſhed vpon a caas a clopſterez
Ful pryuely after Johan the Carpentere
And he drew him a parte oute of the chirche
And ſayde I not I ſaw him nat wyrche
Sithen ſaturday I trow that he be went
For tymber there our abbot hath him ſent
For he is wont for tymberz for to go
And dwelle at the graunge a day or two
Or elles he is at his houſe certeyn
Where that he be I can nat ſothly ſayn
This abſolon ful iolyf was and light
And thought now is tyme to wake al nyght
For ſykerly I ſaw him nat ſterinʒ
Aboute his doze ſithen day gan to ſpringʒ
So mooſ I thryue I ſhalle or cockes crowe
Pryuely knocken at his wyndowe
That ſtont ful lowe vpon his boures wal
To Alſoun now wil I telle myn alle
Myn loue longing for yet I ſhal nat myſ
That at the leeſt wey I ſhal her kyſſe
Som manez comforte ſhal I haue parfay
My mouthe hath itched alle the long day
That is a ſigne of kyſſing at the leeſt
Al nyght eke me mette I was at a feeſt
Therfore I wyl go ſlepe an oure or two
And alle the nyght than wil I walke and pleye
Whan that the firſt cocke hath crowe ano
Vp riſeth this iolyf louez Abſolon
And him arrayeth gay at poynt deuyſe
But firſt he cheweth grayn and lycoryce
To ſmellen ſwete or he hadde kempt his here
Vndre his tong a true loue he bere
For therby went he to haue be gracious

He rometh to the Carpenters house
And styl he stont vndre the shot wyndow
Vnto his brest it raught it was so low
And soft he cowheth with a sempsoun
What do ye honycombe swete alysoun
My fayre byrde my suete synamome
Awaketh lemman myn and spek to me
Full lytel thinke ye vpon my wo
That for your loue I swete there I go
No wondre is though I swelt and swete
I morne as doth a lambe after the tete
Wyf lemman I haue suche loue longing
That lyke a turtyl true is my mornyng
I may nat ete no more than a mayde
Go fro the wyndow iacke fool she sayde
As helpe me god it wol nat be comba me
I loue a nother and elles I were to blame
Wele bet than the by Jesu absolone
Go forth thy wey or I wil throwe a stone
And let me slepe a twenty deuyl way
Alas quod absolon and wele a wey
That true loue was euir so euyl beset
Than hysse me sithen it may be no bet
For iesus loue and for the loue of me
Wylt thou than go thy wey therwith quod she
Ye certis lemman quod this absolon
Than make the redy quod she I come anone
And vnto Nicholas she sayde stylle
Now pease and thou shalt laugh thy fylle
This absolon doun set him on his knees
And sayde I am a lord at alle degrees
For after this I hope ther cometh more
Lemman thy grace and swete byrd thyn ore

The wyndowes she vndoth and that in hast
Haue do quod she com and spede the fast
Lest that oure nyghboures the aspye
This absolon gan wype his mouth fulle dry
Derke was the nyght as pyche or cool
And at the wyndow she put oute her hole
And absolon ne felt ne bet ne wers
But with his mouth he kyst her ers
Fulle sauerly or he were ware of this
Abak he stert and thought it was a mys
For wele wist he a woman hadde no berd
He felt a thing alle rough and long hered
And sayd fy allas what haue I do
Tehe quod she and clapped the wyndow to
And absolon goth forth a sory paas
A berd a berd sayde hend Nicholas
By goddes corpus this goth fayre and wele
This sely absolon herd euery dele
And ony his lippe he gan for angre byte
And to him selue he sayde I shal the quyte
Who rubbyth now who frotyth now his lippes
With dust With cloth With sond With chippes
But absolon that sayeth ful ofte allas
My soule betake I sayde he to sathanas
But me leuyr and alle this toun quod he
On this despyte a wroken for to be
Alas quod he allas that I ne hadde blent
His hote loue was colde and alle queynt
For fro that tyme that he hadde kyst her ars
Of paramours set he nat a carse
For he was heled of his maladye
And oft paramours gan he diffye
And wept as doth a childe that is bete

A ſoft paas he went him ouer the ſtrete
Vnto a ſmyth men called dane gerueys
That in his forge ſmyteth plowharneys
He ſharpith the ſhare and the cultre beſily
This abſolon knocketh alle eaſely
And ſayd vnto geruays and that anon
What who art thou. it am I abſolon
What abſolon what criſtes ſwete tre
Why ryſe ye ſo rathe. ey benedicite
What ayleth you ſom gay gyrle god it woot
Hath brought you thus vpon the berytote
By ſeynt Note ye wote what I mene
This abſolon rought nat a bene
Of alle this play ayen no word he yaf
He hadde wele more thought on his diſtaf
Than geruays knewe and ſeyd frend ſo dere
That hote cultre in the chymney here
As lene it me I haue therwith to done
I wol bringe it the ageyn fulle ſone
Geruays aunſwerd certys were it golde
Or in a pohe nobles alle vntolde
Thou ſholdeſt it haue as I am true ſmyth
Ey criſtes fote what wol ye do therwith
Therfore quod Abſolon be as be may
I ſhalle it telle the to morow or day
And caught the cultre by the colde ſtele
Fulle ſofte oute of the dore he gan ſtele
And wente vnto the carpenters walle
He coughed firſt and knocketh therwith alle
Vpon the wyndow right as he dyd ere
This alyſoun aunſwerd who is there
That knocketh ſo I warraunt it a theef
Why nay quod he god wote my ſwete leef

I am absolon thyn owyn derlyng
Of golde quod he I haue the brought a ryng
My moder yaue it me so god me saue
Fulle fyne it is and therto wele y graue
This wyl I gyue the if thou me kysse
This Nicholas was rysen for to pysse
And thought he wolde amende alle the iape
He sholde kysse his ers or that he scape
And by the wyndow dyd he hastely
And oute his ers he putyth pryuely
Ouer the buttocke of the shanke bone
And therwith spake this clerke absolon
Spek swete byrde I not where thou art
This Nicholas anone let fle a fart
As grete as it hadde been a thondre dynt
That with the stroke he was almoost y blynt
And he was redy with his iron hote
And nycholas amyd the ers he smote
Of goth the skynne an hande brede aboute
The hote cultre brende so his toute
And for the smert he wend for to dye
As he were wode for wo he gan to crye
Help water water help for goddes hert
This carpentere oute of his slombre stert
And herd one cry water as he were wode
And thought allas now cometh the flode
He set him by withoute wordes mo
And with his aye he smote the corde a two
And doun goth alle he fonde neyther to selle
Ne brede ne ale tyl he cam to the selle
Upon the floor and there aswoun he lay
Up stert her alyson and nycholaye
And cryed oute harow in the strete

The nyghboures both ſmale and grete
In ronnyn for to gaWryn on this man
That yet aſWon lay both pale and Wan
For With the falle broſt he hath his arme
But ſtond he muſt vnto his oWen harme
For Whan he ſpake he Was anone bore doun
With hende nycholas and aliſoun
They tolde euery man that he Was Wode
So he Was agaſt of noes flood
Through fantaſye and of his vanyte
He hadde bought him kneding tubbes thre
And hadde them hanged in the roof aboue
And that he prayed them for goddes loue
To ſitten in the roof par compayny
The folke gan laughen at his fantaſy
In to the roof they lyken and they gape
And turned alle his harm to a iape
For Whatſo euir this carpentir aunſWerd
It Was for naught noman his reſon herd
With othes grete he Was ſWore a doun
That he Was holde Wode in alle the toun
For euery clerke right anon helde With other
They ſayd the man Was Wode my leef brother
And euery Wight gan laugh at his ſtrif
Thus ſWyued Was the carpenters Wif
For alle his kepyng and alle his ielouſy
And aBſolon hath kyſſed hir neyther eye
And nycholas is ſcalded in the toute
This tale is done and god ſaue alle the route

Here endith the Myllers Tale
And here begynneth the reues prologue

Whan folke hadde laughen at this nyce caas
Of absolon and of hende nycholas
Diuerse folke diuersely thy sayden
But for the more part they lough and pleyden
Ne at this tale I saw we noman him greue
But it were only Oswalde the Reue
Bicause he was of carpenters craft
A lytel Ire ther is in his hert ther laft
He gan to grutche and blame it a lyte
Sy thee quod he ful wele I coude the quyte
With bleryng of a proude millers eye
If that me lyst to speke of reuaudrye
But I am olde me lyst nat play for age
Gras tyme is done my fodre is now forage
This white top writeth myn olde yeres
Myn hert also moulyd is as my here is
But yet I fare as doth an openers
For that ilke frute is euer lengre the wers
Tyl it be rotyn in mukkode or in stre
We olde men I drede so fare we
Tyl we be rotyn can we nat be rype
We hopen alwey while the world wil pype
For in oure wille ther stekith euir a nayle
To haue an hore hede and a grene tayle
As hath a leche for though oure myght be gone
Oure wil desireth foly euir in one
For whan we may do naught than wille we spoken
yet in oure asshen olde fyre is reken
Foure gledes haue we whiche I shalle deuyse
Auauntyng lying angre and couetyse
These foure sparkles longith vnto elde
Oure olde lymes may we nat be welde
But wil ne shal nat fayle that is soth

And yet I haue alwey a coltes tothe
As many a yere as it was passed henne
Sithen that my tappe of lyf began to renne
For sykerly whan I was born anone
Deth drew the tappe of lyf and lete it gone
And euer sithen hath so the tappe ronne
Tyl that almoost al empty is the tonne
The streme of lyf now droppeth on the chymbe
The sely tunge may wele rynge and chymbe
Of wrechidnesse that past is ful yore
With olde folke saue dotage there is no more
Whan that oure hoost hadde herd this sermonynge
He gan to speken as lordly as a kinge
And sayd what amounteth al this wytte
What shal we speke al day of holy writte
The deuyl made a Reue for to preche
Or of a soutre a shipman or a leche
Say forth thy tale and tary nat the tyme
Lo depford and it is half wey to prime
Lo grene wiche that many a shrewe is in
It were alle tyme thy tale for to begynne
Now sires quod this Oswalde the Reue
I pray you alle that ye you nat greue
Though that I aunswere and some dele sette his howe
For lefulle is with force of force showe
This dronken Myller hath telde vs here
How that begyled was a carpentere
Parauenture in scorn for that I am one
And by youre leue I shalle him quyte anone
Right in his chorles termys wyl I speke
I pray to god his nekke may to breke
He can wele in myn eye se a stalke
But in his owyn eye he can nat se a balke

Here endith the Reues prologue
And here begynneth his Tale



A Trompyngton nat fer from cambrige
There goth a broke and ouir that a brygge
Vpon the whiche broke ther stonte a mylle
And this is verry soth that I you telle
A mylleꝛ was there duelling many a day
As any pecoke he was proude and gay
Pype he coude and fysshe and nettys bete
And turne cuppes and wele wrastyl and shete
And by his belt he bare alonge pauad
And of a swerd fulle trenchant was the blade
A ioly poppeꝛ bare he in his pouche
There was no man for perylle durst him touche
A sheffeld thwetyl bare he in his hose
Rounde was his face and camosed was his nose
Also pylled as an ape was his sculle

He was a marhet bettre at the fulle
Ther durst no wight hand vpon him ledge
That he ne swore anone he sholde abedge
A theif he was for sothe of corn and mele
And that a sligh and vsaunt for to stele
His name was y hote deynus Symkyn
A wif he hadde y come of noble kynne
The parson of the toun her fadre was
With her he yaf many a panne of brasse
For that Symkyn shulde in hie blode alye
She was y fostred in a nonrye
For Symkyn wolde no wyf as he sayd
But if she were wele y norysshed and a mayde
To saue his estate of yemanrye
And she was proude and pert as a pye
A fulle fayre sight was vpon them two
An holyday bifore her wolde he go
With his tepet ybounde aboute his hede
And she cam after in a gytte of rede
And Symkyn hadde hosen of the same
Ther durst no wight clepe her but dame
Was none so hardy that went by the wey
That with her durst ones rage or pley
But if he wolde be slayn of Symkyn
With panade or with knyf or bodekyn
For Jelous folke ben parlous euirmo
Algates they wolde their wyues wenden so
And eke also for she was somdele smotyrliche
She was as digne as water in a diche
And ful of hocour and of bismare
Her thought a lady sholde her spare
What for her kynred and her norture
That she hadde lerned in the nonrye

A doughter hadde they bitwix them two
Of twenty yere without any moo
Sauyng a childe that was of half yere age
In cradyl it lay and was a proppy page
This wenche thicke and wele y growe was
With camoys nose and eyen grey as glas
Buttokes brode and brestes rounde and hye
But right fayre was hey here I wil nat lye
The parson of the town for she was faire
In purpos was to make her his heyre
Bothe of his catel and of his messuage
And straunge he made it of her mariage
His purpos was for to bestowe her hye
Vnto som worthy blode of auncetry
For holy chirche goodes must be spended
On holy chirche blode that is descended
Therfore he wolde his holy blode honoure
Though that he holy chirche shulde deuoure
Gret sokyn hath this myller out of doute
With whete and malt of alle the lond aboute
And namely ther was a grete college
Men clepith it the soler halle in Cambrige
There was their whete and eke their malt y ground
And on a day it happed in a stounde
Sek lay the manciple on a maladye
Men wende wisely that he shulde dye
For whom this myller stale bothe mele and corn
An hundred tyme more than he dyd bifor
For there bifore he stale but curtesly
But now he was a thief outrageously
For whiche the wardeyn chidde and made fare
But therof set the myller nat a tare
He craked bost and swore it was nat so

Than were there yong ſcolers two
That duelden in this halle of whiche I ſey
Testyf they were and lusty for to pley
And only for theire myrth and reualrye
Upon the warden beſily they cry
To yeue them leue but a lytel ſtounde
To go to the mylle and ſe theire corne y grounde
And hardely they durſt ley theire neche
The mylleꝛ ſholde nat ſtele half a pecke
Of corn by sleyght ne by force them reue
And at the laſt the wardyn yaue them leue
John hyght that one and aleyn hight that otheꝛ
Of a toun were they born that hight ſtrodre
Feꝛ in the noꝛth I can nat telle where
This aleyn maketh redy alle his gere
And on an horſe the ſackes he caſt anone
Forth goth aleyn the clerke and eke John
With gode ſwerde and bokleꝛ by his ſyde
John knewe the wey him nedith no gyde
And at the mylle the ſackes adoun he leyeth
Aleyn ſpake firſt alhayle ſymond in feyth
How farys thy fayre doughteꝛ and thy wyf
Aleyn welcom quod Symkyn by my lyf
And John alſo how now what do ye here
Symond quod John nede hath no pere
Him muſt nedes ſerue him ſelue that hath no ſwayn
Oꝛ elles he is a fole as clerkes ſeyn
Our manciple I hope he wille be dede
So wokith ay there wangys in his hede
And therfoꝛe I am come and this aleyn
To grynde oure corn and carry it home ageyn
I pray you ſpede hem hens in that ye may
It ſhalbe do quod Symkyn by my fay

What wil ye do whiles it is in honde
By god right by the hoppes wille I stonde
Quod John and se how the cozy goth in
yet saw I neuir by my fadez kyn
How the hoppes wagges to and fro
Alcyn aunswerd John wilt thou so
Than wil I be byneth by my croun
And se how the mele fallith doun
In to the trough shalbe my dispozte
Foz John in feyth I may be of youz sozte
I am as cuyl a mylles as beey ye
This mylles smyled of theiz nyeyte
And thought alle this is done but foz a wyle
They wene that noman may them begyle
But by my thrift yet shalle I bere theiz eye
Foz alle theiz slight and theire philosophy
The moze queynt crakes that they make
The moze shalle I stele When I take
In stede of floure yet wil I gyue them bren
The gretest clerkes be nat the Wisest men
As Wham to the Wolf thus spake the mare
Of alle theire art ne count I nat a tare
Dute of the doze he goth fulle pryuely
When that he sawe his tyme softly
He lukith vp and doun tyl he hath founde
These clerkes horse where he stode y bounde
Behinde the mylle vndre a lef selle
And to the horse he goth faire and wel
He stripith of the brydel right anone
And When the horse was loos he gan to gone
Toward the fenne where Wilde marys renne
Forth With Weby through thicke and thynne
This mylles goth ayen no Worde he sayde

But doth his note and With the clerkes played
Tyl that theire corn Was faire and Wele grounde
And Whan the mele is sacked and y bounde
This John goth forth and fynt his horse a Wey
And gan to crye harow and Wele a Wey
Oure horse is loost aleyn by cockes bones
Step on thy feet come of man alle at ones
Allas oure Wardeyn hath his palfrey lorne
This aleyn al forgat both mele and corn
Alle Was oute of mynde his husbondrye
What Whiche Wey is he gone he gan crye
The Wif come rennyng in Warde at a renne
She sayd allas youz horse goth to fenne
With Wilde marys as fast as he may go
Unthanke come on his honde that bonde him so
And he that better sholde haue knytte the reyne
Allas quod John allas for cristes peyne
Ley doun thy swerde and I Wille myn also
I am full se wyfte god Wote as is a roo
By cockes soule he shal nat a scape bs bathe
Why ne hadde thou put the caple in the lath
Ille hayle be god aleyn thou art a fonne
The se sely clerkes haue Wele fast y ronne
Toward the fenne both aleyn and eke John
And Whan the Wyllez saW they Were agoon
Ye half a bussbel of theire floure hath take
And badde his Wif go knedde it in a cake
He sayde I trolue the clerkes Were a ferde
yet can a myllez make a clerkes berd
For alle theiz art yet let them go thire Wey
Lo Where they goon so lette the children play
They gette him naught so lightly by my crown
These sely clerkes rennyn bp and doun

With hepe hepe stond stonde Iossa iossa Ware derere
Go whystylle thou there and I shalle hepe him here
But shortly tyl it was verely nyght
They coude nat though they dyd alle theire myght
Theyr cappl cache they ran alwey so fast
Tyl in a diche they caught him at the last
Wery and weet as best is in the rayn
Comyth John the clerke and with him aleyn
Alla s quod John the day that I was born
Now are we dryuen tyl hethyn and tyl scorn
Oure corn is stole men wille vs foules calle
Both the wardeyn and our felowes alle
And namely the Myller Wel a wey
Thus pleyneth John as he goth by the way
Toward the mylle and bayerd in his honde
The myller syttyng by the fyre he fonde
For it was nyght and ferther myght they naught
But for the loue of god they him besought
Of herborough and of ease as for theire peny
The myller sayde ayen if ther be any
Suche as it is yet shalle ye haue youre part
Myn house is stretyt but ye haue lernyd art
ye can by argumentes maken a place
A myle brode of twenty foot of space
Let se now if this place wol suffise
Or make it romer with speche as is youre gyse
Now symond sayd this John by seint cutlerd
Ay art thou mery and that is wele aunswerd
I haue herd say men shal take of two thinges
Suche as he fyndes or suche as he bringes
But specially I pray the hoost so dere
Gette vs som mete and drinke and make vs chere
And we wol pay truly at the fulle

With empty hondes men may nat hawkes take
Lo here my sylver redy for to spende
This Millere to the toun his doughter sende
For ale and brede and rosted them a goos
And bond theire horse he sholde no more go loos
And in his owyn chambre he nade a bedde
With sheetys and with chalons faire y spredde
Nat from his owyn bedde ten fote or twelue
His doughter hadde a bedde al by her selue
Right in the same chambre by and by
It myght be no bet and cause why
Ther was no romer herborow in the place
They soupen and speken them of solace
And dronken euir strong ale at the beste
Aboute mydnyght went they to reste
Wele hath this Millere vernysshed his hede
Full pale he was for dronke and nat rede
He yeyth and he speketh through the nose
As he were in the quache or in the pose
To bedde he goth and with him goth his wif
As any Jay was she light and iolyf
So was her ioly whystyl wele y wette
The cradyl at her beddes feet was sette
To rocken and to yeue the childe soupe
And whan that dawyng was in the crowke
To bedde went the doughter right anone
To bedde went aleyn and also John
There nas nomore ther nedith them no dwale
This Millere hath so wysely bybbed ale
That as an horse he snorteth and route
Ne of his tayle behinde he tooke no kepe
His wif bare him a burdon full strong
Men myght here routyng therin a furlong

The wenche rowted ehe paz company
Aleyn the clerke that hard this melody
He poked John and sayde slepest thou
Hardyst thou euiz suche a song oz now
Lo whiche a coplyng is at wene them alle
A wylde fyre vpon theiz bodies falle
Who herde euiz suche a farly thyng
ye they shalhaue the floure of alle euplendyng
This long nyght thez tyd me no rest
But yet no force alle shalbe foz the best
Foz John sayde aleyn so mot I thryue
If that I may yon wynche wyl I swyue
Som easement hath lawe shapen vs
Foz John ther is a lawe that seyeth thus
That if a man in one thing be aggreued
That in a nothez he shalbe releuyd
Oure cozn is stole sothly it is no nay
And we haue hadde an euyl fyt to day
And sithen I shalhaue non amendement
Agayns my losse I wylle haue easement
By cockes soule it shal none othez be
This John aunswerd aleyn auyse the
This myllez is a par.ous man he sayde
And if that he oute of his slepe abrayde
He myght do vs bothe a vylony
Aleyn aunswerd I count him naught a fly
And vp he roose and by the wenche he crept
This wenche lay vp right and fast slept
Tyl he so nygh was oz she myght aspy
That it hadde be to late foz to crye
And shortly foz to telle they were at one
Now pley aleyn foz I wyl spehe of John
This John lieth stylle a furlong wey oz two

And to him ſelue he made reuthe and wo
Allas quod he this is a wicked iape
Now may I ſay that I am but an ape
yet hath my felawe ſom what for his harme
He hath the Mylleres doughter in his arme
He antred him and hath his nedys ſpedde
And I ly as a draf ſacke in my bedde
And whan this iape is tolde a nother day
I ſhalbe holde a daffe a cokney
I wyl aryſe and auntre it by my fayth
Vnhardy is vnſely thus men ſeyth
And vp he roos and ſoftly he went
Vnto the cradyl and in his arm it hent
And bare it ſoft vnto his beddes fete
Sone afyr the wif her routyng leet
And gan awake and went her oute to pyſſe
And cam ageyn and gan her cradel myſſe
And groped here and there but ſhe fonde none
Allas quod ſhe I hadde almooſt myſſgone
I hadde almooſt goon to the clerkes bedde
Ey benedicite than hadde I foule ſpedde
And forth ſhe went tyl ſhe the cradyl fond
She gropith alwey forther with her hond
And fonde the bedde and thought but gode
Bycauſe that the cradyl by it ſtode
And nyſt where ſhe was for it was derke
And fayre and wele ſhe crept vnto the clerke
And lieth ful ſtylle and wold haue caught a ſlepe
Within a while this John vp leep
And on this gode wif he leyeth on ſore
So mery a fytte ne hadde ſhe yore
He pryched hard and ſore as he were madde
This ioly lyf haue thies two clerkes ladde

Tyl that the thridde cocke began to ſyng
Alepn Wexte Wery in the dawnyng
For he had ſwynken alle the long nyght
And ſayd fare Wele malyn ſWete Wight
The day is com I may no lenger byde
yet euirmore Where ſo I go or ryde
I am thyn owen clerke ſo haue I thele
Now dere lemman quod ſhe go fare Wele
But or thou go o thing I Wyl the telle
Whan that thou Wendeſt homWard by the mylle
Right at the entre of the doze behynde
Thou ſhalt a cake of half a buſſhelle fynde
That Was made of thyn owne mele
Whiche that I holped my fyre for to ſtele
And gode lemman god the ſaue and kepe
And With that Worde almooſt ſhe gan to Wepe
Alepn Cpriſt and thought or that it daW
I Wille go crepe in by my felaWe
And fond the cradyl With his hond anone
Be god thought he alle Wrong haue I gone
My hede is toty of my ſWynke to nyght
That maketh me that I go nat a right
I Wote Wele by the cradyl I haue myſtoo
Here lieth the Mylleꝛ and his Wif alſo
And forth he goth a tWenty deuyl Way
In to the bed there the Mylleꝛ ley
Me Wend haue cropen in by his felaW John
And by the mylleꝛ in he crept anone
And caught him by the necke and ſoft ſpake
He ſayde thou John thou ſWyneſhede aWake
For criſtes ſoule and here a noble game
For by that lord that called is ſeynt Jame
As I haue thries in this ſhorte nyght

I wyued the myllers doughter bolt vp right
Whiles thou hast as a coward be agast
ye false harlot quod the myller hast
A fals traytoure fals clerke quod he
Thou shalt be dede by goddes dignyte
Who durst be so bolde to disperage
My doughter that is of suche lynage
And by the throte bolle he caught a leyn
And he hent him dispitously agayn
And on the nose he smote him with his fyst
Doun ran the blody streme vp on his brest
And in the floze with nose and mouth to brohe
They walowed as pigges doon in the pohe
And vp they gone and doun agayne anone
Tyl that the Myller spozned at a stone
And doun he felle bak ward on his wif
That wist no thing of this nyce stryf
For she was falle a sleep a lytel wight
With Jhon the clerke that wached had al nyght
And with the falle oute of her slepe the brayde
Help holy croos of bromehome she sayde
In manus tuas to the lord I calle
Awake symond the fende is on me falle
My hert is broken help I am but dede
There lieth one on my wombe and on my hede
Help Symkyn for the fals clerkes fight
This Jolin stert vp as fast as he myght
And groped by the walles to and fro
To synde a staf and she stert vp also
And knewe the esters bet than dyd this Jolin
And by the walle a staf she toke anone
And sawe a lytel shymerynge of a light
For at an hole in shone the mone bright

And by that light she saw them bothe two
But sykerly she nyst who was who
And as she saw a white thing in her eye
And whan she cam this white thing aspye
She wende the clerke hadde wered a volupere
And with the staf she dreve ay nere and nere
And hauc hyt this aleyn at the fulle
And smote the myller on the pylde scul
And doun he goth and cryed harow I dye
The clerkes bete him wele and leet him lye
And dressed them and toke their horse anone
And eke their mele and on their wey they gone
And at the mylle doze pit they toke their cake
Of half a bussbel floure wele y bake
Thus is the proude myller wele y bete
And hath y lost the grydyng of the whete
And payed for the soupez euerydele
Of aleyn and of John that bete him wele
His wif is swyued and his doughtez als
Lo suche it is a myllez to be fals
And therto this prouerbe is sayde full soth
Him dare nat wene wele that euyl doth
A gylour shalle him selue begyled be
And god that sytteth high in mageste
Saue al this company grete and smale
Thus haue I quyte the myllez in my tale

Here endyth the Reues tale

And here begynneth the Cokes prologue

The Cooke of london while the reue spake
For ioye he thought he clawed him on the bake

A ha quod he for cristes owy passioun
This myllere hath a sharp conclusioun
Upon his argument of herbegage
Wele soth sayde Salamon in his langage
Ne bringe nat euery man in thy house
For herbourynge by nyght is perlous
Wele ought a man auysed for to be
Whom that he bring into his pryuytee
I pray to god to yeue me sorow and care
If euir sithen I hight hodge of Ware
Herd I myller bet y set a werke
He hadde a iape of malice in the derke
But goddes forbede that we stynty here
And therfore if ye wouchsauf to here
A tale of me that am a poure man
I wol you telle as wele as I can
A lytel iape that fell in oure cyte
Oure hoost aunswerd and sayde I graunt it the
Now telle on Roger loke that it be gode
For many a pasty hast thou let blode
And many a iache of doury hast thou solde
That hadde been twyes hote and twyes colde
Of many a pylgrame hast thou cristes curse
For of thy persely yet fare they the wers
That they haue eten with the stubbed goos
For in thy shoppe is many a flye loos
Now telle on gentyl Roger be thy name
But I pray the be nat wrothe for game
A man may say fulle sothe in game and play
Thou sayst soth quod Roger by my fay
But soth pley quade pley as the flemyng sayth
And therfore harry bally by thy fayth
Be thou nat wroth or we departen here

Thoughe that my tale be of an hostyllere
But neuirtheleſſe I wyl nat telle it yet
But or we departe I wis thou ſhalt be quytte
And ther withalle he lough and made chere
And ſeyd his tale as ye ſhal after here

Here endith the Cokes prologue
And begynneth his Tale



A Prentyes whilom dwelt in oure cyte
Of craft of bytallers was he
As gayland he was as golde fynche in the ſhawe
Broun as a bery a propre ſhort felawe
With lockes y kempt ful fetouſly
Daunce he coude wele and iolyly
Thay he was cleped parkyn reueloure
He was as fulle of loue and paramoure
As in the hyue fulle of hony ſwete

Wele was the wenche that with him myght slepe
And at euery brydale wolde he synge and hoppe
And loued bettyr the nethir ende than the shoppe
For when ther any rydyng was in chepe
Oute of the shoppe thidyr wolde he lepe
Tyl that he hadde alle the sight yseyn
And daunsed wele he wolde nat come ayen
And gadred him a menye of his sorte
To hoppe and syng and make suche disporte
And there they set steuene for to mete
To pleyen at the dyse in suche a strete
For in the toun was there no prentyse
That fayrer coude cast a peyre of dyse
Than Perkyn coude and therto he was fre
Of his dispence in place of pryuete
That fonde his maystere wele in his chaffare
For oftyme he fonde his boy ful bare
For shortly a prentyce that is a reuelour
That hauntith dyce riotte and paramoure
His maystyr shalle it in his shoppe abye
Al haue he no parte of the mynstralsye
For thift and riotte they been conuertible
Al can he pley on getern or rebyble
Reuel and trouthe as in a low degree
They be fulle wrothe alday as men may se
This ioly prentyce with his maystere stode
Tyl he was nigh oute of his prentyshode
Al were he snybbed bothe arely and late
And sumtyme ledde with reuel to Newgate
But at the last his maystyr him bethought
Whan on a day whan he his paper sought
Upon a prouerbe that sayeth this same worde
Wele bet is rotteyn apul oute of horde

Than that he rotey alle the the remanaunt
So farith it by a riottous seruaunt
It is ful lasse harme to let him passe
Than he sholde alle the seruauntes in'the place
Therfore his mayster yaue him a quyttaunce
And bad him go With sorowe and myschaunce
And thus this ioly prentyce hadde his leue
Now let him riotte alle the nyght or leue
And there is no thief Withouten a lowhe
That helpith him to Waste and to sowhe
Of that he bribe can or borow may
Anone he sent his bedde and his arraye
Vnto a compere of his owne sorte
That loueth dyce ryotte and disporte
And hadde a Wyf that helde for contenaunce
A shoppe and swyued for her sustenauuce

Here endith the Cokes Tale
And begynneth the man of lawes prologue

O Vre hoost sawe wele that by the brigth sonne
The arke of his artificialle day is ronne
The fourthe part and half an oure and more
And though he were nat depest stert in lore
He Wyst wele it Was the ybiii day
Of aprylle that is messangere to may
And sawe wele that the shadowe of euery tre
Was as in lengith of the same quantyte
That Was the body erecte that caused it
And therfore by the shadowe he toke his witte
That phebus Whiche that shone so clere and brigth
Degrees Was ybclombey on higth
And for that day as in latitude

It was ten of the clocke he gan conclude
And sodenly he pligh his horse aboute
Lordinges quod he I warne you alle the route
The fourth part of this day is gone
Now for the loue of god and seint Johñ
Lese no tyme as ferforth as ye may
Lordynges the tyme wastith bothe nyght and day
And stelith fro vs what pryuely slepyng
And what thrugh neglegence in oure walking
As doth the streme that turneth neuir agayn
Descending fro the montayn into the playn
Wele can senequyke and many a philosophez
Bewayle tyme more than golde in cofre
For losse of catel may recouered be
But losse of tyme shendyth vs quod he
It wil nat come ayen Withouten drede
Nomore than wil malkyns madynhede
Whan that she hath in hez wauntonesse
Let vs nat mowlyn thus in Idelnesse
Sire may of law quod he so haue ye blisse
Tel vs a tale anone as forward is
ye be submytted through youre fre assent
To stond in this case to my Jugement
Acquyte you now of youre beheest
Than haue ye do youre deuoure at the leest
Hoost quod he depardieuy ie assent
To breke forward it is nat myn entent
Behest is dette and I wolde holde fayn
Alle my beheest I can no bettre fayn
For suche lawe as may geuyth any othez wight
He shulde him selue vse it by right
Thus wol oure teyt but neuirtheless certayne
I can right now no thrifty tale seyn

Than Chaucer thoughe he can but lewdely
On metres or on rymyng craftely
Hath sayd them in suche englisshe as he can
Of olde tymes as knowith many a man
And if he ne hath nat sayde them leue brother
In one boke he hath sayde them in one other
For he hath tolde of louers vp and doun
Mo than Ouyd made of mencioin
In his epistelles that been fulle olde
What sholde I telle them sithen they be tolde
In youthe he made of Ceys of alcion
And sith he hath spoken of euerichon
These noble wyues and thies noble louers eke
Who so that wol his large volume seke
Cleped the saintes lyues of cuyde
There may he se the large woundes wyde
Of Lucresse and of babylone tysby
The swerde of dydo for the fals Ene
The tre of phillis for hir demophon
The playnte of dyanere and of hermeon
Of adryane and eke of ysiphile
The barreyn yle stondyng in the see
The dreynt liandre for hir eryo
The terys of Eleyne and eke the wo
Of Briseyde and of Lacedomea
The cruelte of the quene medea
The lytel childreyn hangyng by the halse
For thy Jason that was of loue so false
Eyprimystra penolope and alceste
youre wifhode comendyng with the best
But certaynly no worde writh he
Of that wicked ensample of Canace
That loued hir owne brother synfully

Of whiche cursed stories I say fy
Dzelles of Tyrus appolonius
How that the cursed kinge Antiochus
Beraft his doughtez of hez madynhede
That is so hozrible a tale foz to rede
Whan he hez threw vpon the pauement
And therfore he fulle of auysement
Wolde neuiz Write in none of his sermons
Of suche vnkinde abhomynacions
Ne I Wil nat reherse if that I may
But of my tale What shulde I doo this day
Me were fulle lothe be lykened doutles
To myses that men clepe pyerides
Methamozphoseos Wote What I mene
But neuirtheleſſe I reck nat a bene
Though I com aftez him With haue We bake
I spehe in prose and let him rymes make
And With that Wozde he With a sobre chere
Began his tale as ye shalle aftez here

Here endith the may of lawes prologe
And here begynneth his tale



O Hatefulle harme condicion of pouert
With thrist colde and hungere soze confounded
To asshen helpe the shameth in thyn hert
Of thou none ashe with nede art thou wounded
That berry nede vnwrappith al thy woundes hid
Maugre thyn hede thou must foz indigence
Dz stele oz begge oz bozowe thyn dispence
Thou blamyst crist and sayest fulle bitterly
He mys departeth riches temporalle
Thy nyghboure thou witest sinfully
And sayest thou hast to lyte and he hath alle
Parfay sayest thou somtyme he rekyn shalle
Whan that his tayle shal brenne in the glede
Foz be nat helpith the nedefulle in theire nede
Herke what is the sentence of the wise
Bet is to dyen than to haue indigence
Thy selue nyghbouz wol the despyse
Of thou be poure faze wele thy reuerence
yet of the wiseman take this sentence
That alle the daies of poure men been wicke
Beware therof oz thou com to the pryche
Of thou be poure thy brodez hatyth the
And alle thy frendes fle fro the allas
O riche marchauntes fulle of wele ye be
O noble o prudent folke as in this caas
youz baggges be nat fylled with ambes aas
But with syce synke that rennyth in youz chaunce
At cristemasse mery may ye daunce
ye schyn lond and see foz youz wynnynges
And as wise folke ye knowe alle the state
Of reignes. ye been faders of tydinges
And tales bothe of pease and of debate
I were ryght now of a tale desolate

Nere that a marchaunte gone is many a yere
We taught a tale the whiche that ye ſhalle here
In Surry whilom duelt a company
Of chapmen riche and therto ſadde and trewe
That wyde were ſenten theire ſpycery
Clothes of golde and ſatyn riche of hewe
Theire chaffare was ſo truſty and ſo newe
That euery wight hath deynte to chaffare
With them and eke to ſellen them theire ware
Now fel it that the mayſters of the ſorte
Haue ſhapen them to Rome for to wende
Were it for chapmanhede or for diſporte
None other meſſage wolde they thider ſend
But cam theire ſelue to Rome this is the ende
And in ſuche place as thought them auauntage
For theire entent they taken theire herbygage
Soiorned haue thiſe marchauntes in that toun
A certayn tyme as fyl for theire pleſaunce
But ſo bifyl that the excellent renoun
Of the Emperours doughter dame conſtance
Reported was with euery circumſtaunce
Vnto thies ſurriens marchauntes in ſuche wiſe
Fro day to day as I ſhalle you deuyſe
This was the comen voyce of euery man
Oure Emperour of Rome god him ſe
A doughter hath that ſith the worlde began
To reken as wele hir goodneſſe as hir beautye
Was neuir ſuche a nother as was ſhe
I pray to god in honoure hir ſuſteyne
And wolde ſhe were of alle europe the quene
In hir is high beaute without pryde
youthe without gref or folye
To alle hir werkes vertue is her gyde

Humblenesse hath slayne in her al tyrannye
She is a myrroure of alle curtesye
Her hett is verry chambre of holynesse
Her hond mynyster of fredom for almesse
And alle this boys is soth as god is trewe
But now to purpos let be turne agayn
Thise marchantes haue do fraught ther shippes new
And whan they haue the blisful mady seyn
Home to surry been they went agayn
And done theire nedes as they haue do yore
And lyuen in wele I can say nomore
Now fyll that these marchauntes stode in grace
Of him that was the sowdeyn of surrye
For whan that they cam fro any straunge place
He wolde him selue of his benygne curtesy
Make them gode chere and besily aspye
Tydinges of sondry realmes for to here
The wondres that they myght se or here
Amonge other thinges specially
The marchauntes haue tolde of dame Custaunce
So grete noblenesse in ernest seriously
That this sowdan hath caught so grete plesaunce
To haue her figure in his remembraunce
That alle his lust and alle his besy cure
Was for to loue her whiles that his lyf may dure
Parauenture in that large bokke
Whiche men clepe the heuyn y writte was
With sterres or that he his birth tokke
That he for loue shulde haue his dethe alas
For in the sterres clerer than is the glas
Is writen god wote who so coude it rede
The deth of euery man withouten drede
In sterres many a wyntre there biforn

was write the deth of hector and achilles
Of pompey Julyus or they were born
The stryf of Thebes and of hercules
Of Sampson Turnus and socrates
The deth. But mennys wyttes be so dulle
That no wight can rede it at the fulle
This sowdan for his pryue counseyl sent
And shortly on this matere for to passe
He hath to them declared his entent
And sayd them certeyn but he myght haue grace
To haue Custaunce within a lytel space
He nas but dede and charged them on hye
To shape for him som remedy
Dyuerse men dyuerse thinges saydeyn
They argumentes casteyn vp and doun
Many a subtel reson forth they laydeyn
They spake of magyke and abusioun
And fynally as in that conclusioun
They can nat se in that none auauntage
Ne by none other wey saue in mariage
Thay saw they there in suche difficultye
By way of reson to speke alle playn
Bicause that ther was suche dyuersite
Bitwyxt theire both lawes that they sayn
They trowe that no cristeyn prynce wolde fayne
Wedden his childe vndre oure lawes swete
That vs was taught by mahoumd the prophete
And he aunswered them rather than Ilese
Custaunce I wil be cristened doutles
I moot be herys I may none other chese
I pray you holde youre argumentes in peese
Sauyth my lyf and be nat rechelesse
To geteyn hez that hath my lyf in cure

For in this woo I may nat long endure
What nedith grete dylatacioun
I say by tretyse and enbassettrye
And by the popes mediacioun
And alle the chirche and alle the cheualrye
That in distruccioun of maumentrye
And in encresse of cristes lawe deze
They been accorded so as ye shalle here
How that the sowdey and his baronage
And alle his lieges shulde cristened be
And he shal haue Custaunce in mariage
And certayn golde I not what quantite
And therto founde they sufficient surete
The same accorde was sworn in either syde
Now faire custaunce almyghty god the gyde
Now wolde som men wene as I gesse
That I sholde telle alle the purueaunce
That the Emperour of his grete noblenesse
Hath shapen for his doughteze dame custaunce
Wele may men know that so grete ordenaunce
May noman telle in a lytel clause
As was arayed for so higth a cause
Bisshoppes been shapen with hez for to wende
Lordes ladies knyghtes of grete renoun
And othez folke ynough this is the ende
And notifyed is oute though the toun
That euery wight with grete deuocioun
Sholde praye crist that he this mariage
Receyue in gre and spede this biage
The day is com of hez departyng
I say the wofulle day fatalle is come
That there may be no lengez taryng
But forward they dresse them alle and som

Custaunce that was with sorow alle ouircom
Fulle pale ariseth and dressith hez to wende
For wele she wote there is none othez ende
Allas what wondre it is though she wept
That shal be sent to straunge naciouñ
Fro frendes that hez so tenderly kept
And to be bounde vndre subiectiouñ
Of one she knowith nat the condiciouñ
Husbondes been alle gode and haue be yore
That knowe wyues I daz say nomore
Fadre she sayde thy wrecched childe custaunce
Thy yongˉ doughtez fostred vp so soft
And ye my modre my souerayñ plesaunce
Ouez alle thingˉ oute take crist on lofte
Custaunce youre childe hez recomaundeth ofte
Vnto youz grace for I shalle to Surrye
Ne shalle I neuir see you more with eye
Allas vnto the barbaryne naciouñ
I must anone sithen that it is youre wille
But crist that dyed oure redempciouñ
So yeue me grace his hestys to fulfille
I wrecched woman no force though I spylle
Women are bozn to thraldom and penaunce
And to be vndre mannys gouernaunce
I trowe at trope whan turnus brake the walle
Of Ilion noz brent was Thebes the cyte
Ne at Rome for the harme through Hanyballe
That Romayns hadde benquyssched tymes thre
Nas herd suche tendre wepyng for pyte
As was the chambre for hez departyng
But forth she mot whether she wepe oz syngˉ
O first mouyngˉ cruel firmament
With thy dyurnalle swegh that crowdest alle

And hurtliste al fro Est to occident
That naturally wolde holde another wey
Thy croudyng set the heuyn in suche array
At the begynnyng of this fiers viage
That cruel mars hath slayn this mariage
O infortunat ascendaunt tortuous
Of whiche the lord is helples falle allas
O ute of his angle into the thridde house
O mars o occita sez as in this caas
O feble mone vnhappy be thy paas
Thou knettyst the there thou art nat resceyued
There thou were wele fro thens art thou weyuyd
Imprudent Empezoure of Rome alias
Was there no philosophre in thy toun
Is no tyme bettre than a nother in this caas
Of viages is there none electioun
Namely to folke of high condicioun
Nat whan a rote is of a birthe y knowe
Alas we been to lewde and eltis to slow
To shippe is brought this woful fayre mayde
Solempnely with euery circumstaunce
Now Jesu crist be with you alle she sayde
There is no moze but fare wele fayre custaunce
She peyneth hez self to make gode contenaunce
And forth fleet hez sayle in this manere
And turne ayen I wille to my matere
The moder of the sowdan weile of vices
Aspyed hath hez sonnys playn entent
Howe he wolde lete his olde sacrifices
And right anone she for hez counseyl sent
And they cam to know what she ment
And whan assembled was this folke in fere
She sette hez doun and sayd as ye shalle here

Lordinges quod she ye knowe wele euerichone
Holw that my sonne is in poynte for to lete
The holy lawes of oure alcazon
yeuen by goddes messangere machomete
But on a bolwe to the grete god I hete
The lyf shalle rather oute of my body stert
Or machometes lawe go oute of my hert
What shuld vs tyden of this newe lawe
But thraldom to oure body and penaunce
And afterward in helle to be drawe
For we renewed mahoun oure creaunce
But lordes wil ye make assuraunce
As I shal say assentyng to my lore
And I shalle make vs sauf for euirmore
They swore and assentyd euery man
To lyue with her and dye and by her stonde
And euerich in the best wise that he can
To strengith her shal his frendes fonde
As she that hath this empryse take on honde
Whiche ye shal here as I shal deuyse
And to them alle she spake in this wise
We shal first fayne cristendome to take
Colde water ne shal vs greue but a lyte
And I shal suche a fest and a reuel make
That as I trowe I shal the sowdan quyte
For though his wif be cristened neuir so white
She shal haue nede to washe away the rede
Though she a fonte fulle of water with her lede
O sowdannes rote of iniquite
Virago thou samarian the seconde
O serpent vndre femenynyte
ylyke vnto the serpent depe in helle y bounde
O feyned woman alle that may confounde

Vertue and Innocence through thy malice
Y bred is in the as neste of euery vyce
O sathan enuyous sithen that day
That thou were chased from oure heritage
Wele knowest thou to women the olde wey
Thou madest eua to bringe vs in seruage
Thou wolde fordone this cristen mariage
Thyn instrument so wele awey the while
Maryst thou of women whan thou wilt begyle
This sowdonesse whom I blame and wary
Lete pryuely hir counseyl go theiz wey
What shulde I lengez in this tale tary
She rideth to the sowdan on a day
And sayd to him that she wolde renye hez lay
And cristendome of prestes honde fonte
Repentyng hez that she hethen was so longe
Besechyng him to do hez that honoure
That she myght haue the cristen folke to feest
To pleasen them I wil do my laboure
The sowdan sayeth I wil do at youre hest
And knelyng thanked hez of that request
So glade he was he nyst what to say
She kyssed hez sonne and home she goth hez way
Aryued be these cristen folke to lond
In surrye with a grete solempne route
And hastely this sowdan sent his sonde
First to his modez and to alle the reigne aboute
And sayde his wif was come Withoute doute
And prayed hez to ryde ayens the quene
The honouz of his reigne to susteyne
Grete was the prees and riche was the arraye
Of surzyens and of Romaynes mete in fere
The modre of the sowdan riche and gay

Reſceyued hez with alle glade chere
As any modre myght hez doughtez dere
And to the neyt cyte thezе beſyde
A ſoft paas ſolempnely thy ryde
Nat trowe I the tryumphe of Julius
Of whiche that lucan makith ſuche a booſt
Was ryallere ne moze curious
Than was the aſſemble of this bliſful hooſt
But this ſcozppon this wicked gooſt
The ſowdonneſſe foz alle hez flateringe
Caſt vndre this ful moztalip to ſtyng
The ſowdan cometh him ſelue ſone aftez this
So rialip that wondre was to telle
And welcometh hez with ioye and blys
And thus in ioy and bliſſe I lete them duelle
The frute of euery tale foz to telle
Me thought it whan tyme cam foz the beſt
That reuel to ſtynt and men to go to zeſt
The tyme cam this olde ſowdonneſſe
Ordeyned hath this feſte of whiche I tolde
And to the feſte criſten men dreſſe
In generalle bothe yong and olde
There may men riaitye and feſt beholde
And deyntes mo than I can deuyſe
But alle to dere they bought it oz they ryſe
O ſodeyn woo that euez art ſucceſſoure
To worldly blys ſpreynt with bitterneſſe
The ende of ioye and oure worldly laboure
Wo occupieth the fyne of oure gladneſſe
Herkyn this counſel foz thy ſykerneſſe
Upon thy gladde day haue in thy mynde
The vnwaar woo that cometh the behinde
Foz ſhortly to telle at one worde

The ſoudan and the criſten euerichone
Been alle to hewyn and ſtyched at the bord
But it were only dame Cuſtaunce allone
This olde ſawdonneſſe curſed crone
Hath with hez frendes there done this curſed dede
For ſhe hez ſelue wolde alle the countre lede
Ne there was ſurreyn none that was conuerted
That of the counſeyl of the ſoudan wote
That he nas alle to hewey oz he aſtertyd
And Cuſtaunce haue taken anone fote hote
And in a ſhippe ſtereles god it wote
They haue hez ſet and badde hez lerne to ſayle
Oute of ſurry ageyn ward into ytayle
A certayn treſoure that ſhe thidre ledde
And ſoth to ſayn ỹtayle grete plente
They haue hez yeue and clothes eke ſhe hadde
And forth ſhe ſayled into the ſalt ſee
O my cuſtaunce fulle of benygnite
O Emperours yong doughtez dere
He that is lorde ouez fortune be thy ſtere
She bliſſed hez and with ful pytous voyce
Unto the croſe of cryſt thus ſayd ſhe
O clere o welefulle autre holy croyce
Rede of the lambes blode fulle of pyte
That weſſheth the worlde fro olde iniquite
Me fro the feende and fro his clawes kepe
That day that I ſhal drenche in the depe
Victoryous tre of protectioun trewe
That only were worthy for to bere
The kyng of heuyn with his woundes newe
The white lambe that hurt was with a ſpere
Flemez of feendes oute of him and of here
Of whiche thy lynes faythfully extende

We hepe and yeue me my lyf tamende
yeres and daies fleet this creature
Throughe oute the se of greke into the strayte
Of marroke as it was her auenture
Of many a sory mele may she bayte
After her deth ful ofte may she wayte
Or that the wilde wawes wolde her dryue
Vnto the place where she myght aryue
Men myght ashe why she was nat slayne
Eke at the feest who myght her body saue
And Iaunswerd to that demaunde agayne
Who saued danyel in the horrible caue
There euery wight were he mayster or knaue
Was with the lyoun fret or he astert
No wight but god that she bare in her hert
God lyst to shewe his wonderfulle myracle
In her for we shulde see his myghty werkes
Crist that is of enery harme tryacle
By certayn meanes as knowen clerkes
Doth thinges that for certayn ende fulle derke is
To mannys wytte that for oure ignorance
Ne can nat knowe his prudent purueaunce
Now sith that she nas at the feest y slawe
Who kept her fro drenchyn in the see
Who kept Jonas in the fysshes mawe
Tyl he was spouted oute of myn yue
Wele may men knawe it was no wight but he
That kept the peple hebrayche fro drenching
With dry fote oute throughe the se see passing
Who hath the foure spirytes of the tempeste
That power haue to noyen londe and see
Both north and south west and est
Anoyeth nether lond house ne tre

Sothly the comaundre of that was he
That fro the tempest ay the Woman kept
As wele whan she woke as whan she slept
Where myght this woman mete or drynke haue
Thre yere and more lastith hir wytayle
Who fedde the egipcian mary in the caue
Or in deserte nat but crist sauns fayle
Fyue thousand folke it was as grete meruayle
With loues fyue and fysshes to fede
God sent his foyson at hir grete nede
She dryueth forth into oure occian
Through oute oure Wilde see tyl at the last
Vndre an holde that name Jne can
Fer in northumberland the wawes hir cast
And in the sond the shippe stycked so fast
That thens wolde it nat al that tyde
The wil of crist was there she shulde abyde
The constable of the castel doun is fare
To se this wrache and alle the shippe he sought
And fonde this wery woman ful of care
He fonde also the tresoure that she bought
In hir langage mercy she besought
The lyf oute hir body for to wynne
Hir to delyuer oute of the wo that she was in
A maner latyn corrupt was hir speche
But algates therby was she vnderstonde
The constable whan him lyst no lengere seche
This wofful woman brought he to londe
She knelith doun and thankith cristes sonde
But what she was she wolde to noman say
For soule ne fayre though she sholde dye
She sayde she was so mased in the see
That she forgate hir mynde by hir trouthe

The constable hath of her so grete pyte
And eke his wif that wepyn sore for routhe
She was so diligent withouten slowthe
To serue and please eueriche in that place
That al her loue that lohen in her face
The constable and dame hermegylde his wif
Were paynems and that countre euery where
But hermegylde loued her right as her lyf
And custaunce hath so long y soiorned there
In ory son with many a byttre tere
Tyl Jesus hath conuerted through his grace
Dame hermegylde the constablesse of that place
In alle that londe no cristen durst route
Alle cristen men be fledde fro that countre
Through paynems that conquered alle aboute
The reame as wele by land as by see
To Wales thay fledde the cristianyte
Of olde britons dwellyng in that Jle
Ther was no refute for the meane while
But yet nere cristen britones sone exiled
That there nare som in her pryuete
Honoured crist and he then folke begyled
And nyght the castel suche there duelled thre
That one of them was blynde and myght nat se
But it were with thiche eyen of his mynde
With whiche they seen after men be blynde
Bright was the sonne as in a somers day
For whiche the constable and his wif also
And Custaunce hath take the right wey
Toward the see a furlong wey or two
To pleyen and to romen to and fro
And in this walke the blynde men they mette
Croked and olde with eyen fast y shette

In the name of crist cried this brytoun
Dame harmegylde yeue me me my sight ayen
This lady wayt afrayed of that soun
Lest that her husbond shortly for to seyn
Wolde her for iesus cristes loze haue slayn
Tyl custaunce made her bolde and bad her wirche
The wyl of crist as doughter of holy chirche
The constable weyt abasshed of that sight
And sayd What amounteth alle this fare
Custaunce aunswerd siz it is cristes myght
That helpith folke oute of the feendes snare
And so fer forth she can oure lawe declare
That she the constable oz it were eue
Conuertyd hath and on crist made him beleue
This constable was nothing lord of this place
Of whiche I spake there he custaunce fonde
But kept it strongly many a wynters space
Vndre alla king of al northumberland
That was fulle wise and hardy of his hond
Ayenst the Scottes as men may wele here
But turne agayn I wil to my matere
Sathan that euer bi wayteth to beguyle
Saw of custaunce alle the perfectioun
And cast anone how he myght quyte her while
And made a yong knyght duelling in that toun
Loue her so hote of foule affectioun
That bi ryght him thought he shulde spyl
But he of her onys myght haue his wylle
He wowith her but it auayleth naught
She wolde do no synne by no wey
And for despyte he compassed in his thought
To make her on a shameful deth to dye
He wayteth whan the constable is awey

And pryuely on a nyght he crept
In hermegyldes chambre whiles she slepte
Wery for waked in her oryssons
Slepith hermegyld and custaunce also
This knyght through sathans temptacions
Alle softly is to the bedde y goo
And kytte the throte of hermegylde a two
And lepde the blody knyght by dame custaunce
And went his wey ther god gyue him myschaunce
Sone after cometh the constable agayn
And eke Alla that was king of the lond
And sawe his wif dispytously slayne
For whom he wept and wronge his honde
And in the bedde the blody knyf he fonde
By dame custaunce allas what myght she say
For verry wo her witte was alle away
To king Alla was tolde alle this myschaunce
And the tyme and where and eke the wise
That in a shippe was founde this custaunce
As here bifore ye may haue herd deuyse
The kinges hert of pyte gan aryse
Whan he sawe the benygne creature
Falle in disease and in myssauenture
For as the lambe toward his deth is brought
So stant this innocent afore the king
This fals knyght that hath this treson wrought
Berith her on honde she hathe do this thing
But nathelesse there was grete mornyng
Among the peple and saydem they can nat gesse
That hadde nat do so grete a wickednesse
For they haue seen her euir so vertuous
And louyng hermegylde right as her lyf
Of this bare witnesse euerich in that house

Saue that he slowe hermegyld with the knyf
This gentyl king hath caught a grete motyf
Of this witnesse and though he wolde enquere
Deppere in this caas and trouthe for to lere
Alas custaunce thou hast no champyon
Ne fyght canst thou nat welaway
But he that starf for oure redempcion
Bond sathan and yet lieth there he lay
He be the stronge champion this day
For but if crist open myracle kythe
Without gylt thou shalt be slayne as swythe
She sette her doune on her knees & thus she sayde
Immortalle god that sauedest susanne
Fro fals blame and thou merciful mayde
Mary I mene doughter of seint Anne
Bifore whose childe angeles synge osanne
If I be gyltles of this felonye
My socoure be or elles I shalle dye
Haue ye nat sumtyme a pale face
Amonge a prees of him that hath been ladde
Toward his deth where he getteth no grace
And suche a colour in his face he hadde
Men myght knowe his face that was be stadde
Amonge al the faces in that route
So standith custaunce and loketh her aboute
O quenes lyuyng whilom in prosperyte
Duchesses and theladies euerichone
Haue som routhe on theiz aduersite
An emperours doughter stant alone
She wote nat to whom to make her mone
O blode ryalle that stondith in this drede
Fer been thy frendes at thy grete nede
This alla king hath suche compassion

A gentyl herte is fulfilled of pyte
That from his eyen ran the watez doune
Now hastely go fet a boke quod he
And if this knyght wol swere that she
Hath thes woman slayne yet wol we bs auyse
Whom that we wol shalbe oure iustice
A breton boke writen with euangelies
Was set and theron she swoze anone
The gylty was and in the meane whiles
An honde him smote bpon the necke bone
That doun he fyl at ones as a stone
And both his eyen brest oute of his face
In sight of euery body in that place
A boyce was herd in generalle audience
And sayde thou hast disclaundred gyltles
The doughtez of holy chirche in high presence
Thus hast thou done and yete I holde my pees
Of this mervayle agast was al the prees
As maſed folke they stonden euerichone
Foz drede of wrecche saue custaunce alone
Grete was the drede and eke the repentaunce
Of them that hadde wronge suspection
Upon this sely Innocent custaunce
And foz this myracle in conclusioun
And by custaunce mediacioun
The king and many anothez in that place
Conuerted was thanked be cristes grace
This fals knyght was slayne foz his untrouthe
By iugement of the king Alla hastely
And yet hath Custaunce of his deth grete routhe
And aftez this iesus of his mercy
Made Alla to wedden ful solempnely
This holy mayden that is so bright and shene

And thus hath crist made Custaunce a quene
But who was wofulle if I shalle nat lye
Of this weddyng but dongelde and no mo
The kinges modre ful of tyrannye
Her thought her cursed hert brast a two
She nolde nat her sonne had do soo
Her thought a despyte that he sholde take
So straunge a creature vnto his make
We lyst nat of the chaf ne of the stre
Make so long a tale as of the corn
What shulde I telle of the ryalte
Of this mariage or whiche cours goth biforn
Who blowith in a trompe or who in a horn
The frute of euery tale is for to sey
They ete and drinke daunce syng and pley
They go to bedde as it is skylle and right
For though that wyues be ful holy thinges
They must take in pacient a nyght
Suche maner necessaries as been plesinges
To folke that haue wedded them with ringes
And ley a lytel theire holyneesse a syde
As for the tyme it may none other betyde
On her he begate a may childe anone
And to a bisshop and to his constable che
He toke his wif to kepe when he is gone
To Scotlondward his fomen for to seke
Now faire Custaunce that is so humble and meke
So long is gone with childe in that stylle
She kept her chambre abyding goddes wil
The tyme is come a may childe she bere
Mauricius at the fontstone they him calle
This constable doth forth come a messangere
And wrote vnto this kinge that cleped was alle

Now that this blissfulle tydynges is befalle
And other thinge whiche was neddfulle to say
He taketh his lettre and forth he goth his wey
This messangere to do his auantage
Vnto the kinges modre rideth he swythe
And saluyeth her fayre in his langage
Madame quod he ye may be glade and blithe
And thanken god an hundreth thousand sythe
My lady the quene hath childe withouten doute
To ioye and blisse of alle the reigne aboute
Lo here the lettres sealed of this thing
That I must bere in alle the hast I may
If ye wyl ought to youre son the king
I am youre seruaunt both nyght and day
Donegeld aun swerd as now at this tyme nay
But here alle nyght I wille thou take thy rest
To morow I wil say the what me lyst
This messangere dranke sadly ale and wyne
And stolen were his lettres pryuely
Oute of his boy whiles he slept as a swyne
And countrefeted was fulle subtely
A nother letere wrought ful syn fully
Vnto the king directed of this matere
Fro his constable as ye may after here
The lettre spake the quene delyuered was
Of so horrible a feendly creature
That in the castel none so hardy was
There no while any wight may endure
The modre was an elphe by auenture
y comen by charmes or by socery
And euery wight hatith her company
Wo was the king whan he this lettre hadde seyn
But to no wight he tolde his sorowes sore

But of his owen hond he wrote agayn
Welcom the sonde of criste for euirmore
To me that am newe lerned in this lore
Lorde welcom be thy lust and thy plesaunce
My lust I put alle in thy ordenaunce
Nere this childe alle be it foule or fayre
And eke my wif vnto my home comyng
Criste whan himkyst may sende me an eyre
More aggreable than this to my lykyng
This lettre he sealith pryuely wepyng
Whiche to the messangere was y take sone
And forth he goth there is nomore to done
O messangere fulfylled with dronknes
Straunge is thy breth thy lymes flatery ay
And thou bewrethest alle secretenesse
Thy mynde islore thou iangelyst as a Jay
Thy face is turned as in a newe aray
There dronknesse reigneth in any route
There is no counseyle kept it is no doute
O donegelde I haue none englisshe digne
Vnto thy malice and thy tyrannye
And therfore to the feende I the resigne
Let him endityn of thy traytourye
Fy manysshe fy o nay by god I lye
Fy feendly spyrite for I dare wele telle
Though thou here walke thy spyrite is in helle
This messangere cometh fro the kinge agayn
And at the kinges moders courte he light
And she was of this messangere fulle fayne
And pleased him in alle that euer she myght
He dronke and wele his gyrdyl vndre pight
He slepith and he snorteth in his guyse
Al nyght tyl the son gan aryse

Afte⁊ was his lettres ſtolen euerichone
And countrefeted lettres in this wiſe
The king comaundith his conſtable anone
Vp peyn of hanging and on high Juyſe
That he ne ſhulde ſuffe⁊ in no wiſe
Cuſtaunce in his reigne fo⁊ to abyde
Thre daies and a quarte⁊ of a tyde
But in the ſame ſhippe as he hez fonde
Hez and hez yong ſonne and alle hez gere
He ſholde put and croude fro the londe
And charge hez that ſhe come neuir eft there
O my Cuſtaunce wele may thy gooſt haue fere
And ſlepen in thy dreme by penaunce
Whan done gelde caſtith alle this o⁊denaunce
This meſſangere on mo⁊owe Whan he wohe
Vnto the caſtelle holdith the next Way
And vnto the Conſtable he the lettres tohe
And Whan that he this pytous lettre ſaye
Fulle ofte⁊ he ſayde allas and Wele a Wey
Lo⁊d criſt quod he hou may this Wo⁊lde endure
So fulle of ſynne is many a creature
O myghty god if that it be thy Wille
Sithen thou art right fulle iuge hou may it be
That thou Wil ſuffre Innocence to ſpylle
And Wicked folke reigne in proſperite
O gode Cuſtaunce allas ſo Wo is me
That I moot be thy turmentouze o⁊ elles deye
On ſhame fulle deth there is none of hez Wey
Wepyn bothe olde and yong in that place
Whan that the king this curſed lettre ſent
And Cuſtaunce With a dedely pale face
The Wey toWard the ſhippe ſhe Went
But neuirthele ſſe ſhe takith in gode entent

The wyl of criſte and knelinꝫ on the ſtrond
She ſayde ay welcome be thy ſonde
He that me kept fro the fals blame
Whiles that I was in the londe amonges you
He can me kepe fro harme and eke fro ſhame
In the ſalt ſee al though ye ſee nat how
As ſtronge as euir he was he is yet nowe
In him I truſt and in his moder deze
That is to me my ſayle and eke my ſtere
Her lytel childe lay wepyng in her arme
And knelinꝫ pytouſly to him ſhe ſayde
Peaſe lytel childe I wil do the none harme
With that the kyrchief from her hede ſhe brayde
And ouer his lytel eyen ſhe it layed
And in her arme ſhe lullith it ſulle faſt
And into heuyn bp her eyen ſhe caſt
Modre quod ſhe and mayde bright Marye
Soth is that through womannys eggement
Mankynde was looſt and dampned euir to dye
For whiche thy childe was on the croce to rent
Thy bliſful eyen ſawe al this turment
Than is there no compariſon bitwene
Thyn wo and any wo that man may ſuſteyne
Thou ſawest thy childe ſlayn afore thyn eyen
And yet nowe lyueth my lytel childe parfay
Now lady bright to whom alle ſulle crien
Thou glorye of womanhode thou fayre may
Thou hauyn of refute bright ſterze of day
Rewe on my childe that of thy gentyleneſſe
Reweſt on euery rewful in diſtreſſe
O lytel childe allas what is thy gylt
That neuir wroughteſt ſynne as yet parde
Why wyl thy hazde fadre haue the ſpilt

O mercy and dere constable quod she
As let my lytel childe duelle here with the
And if thou darst nat saue him for blame
To kysse him onys in his faders name
Therwith she loked backward to the londe
And sayde fare wele husbond routhlesse
And vp she rose and walked doun the stronde
Toward hir shippe hir folowith alle the prees
And euer she prayeth hir childe to holde his peas
And taketh hir leue with an holy entent
She blissith hir and into ship she went
Vytayled was the shippe it is no drede
Habundantly for hir long space
And othir necessaries that sholde nede
She hadde ynough heried be goddes grace
For wynde and weddre almyghtye god purchace
And bring hir home I can no bettre sey
But in the see she dryueth forth the wey
a Ella the king cometh sone after this
Vnto his castel of whiche I tolde
And asked where his wif and his childe is
The constable gan aboute his hert to colde
And pleynly alle the maner he him tolde
As ye haue herd I can it telle no bettre
And shewith the kinges seale and his lettre
And sayde lorde as ye comaunded me
Vp peyne of dethe so haue I do certayn
This messangere turmentyd was tyl he
Must be knowe and tel plat and playn
Fro nyght to nyght what place he hadde in layne
And thus he with subtel enquerynge
Imagyned was by whom this harme gan spring
The honde was knowen that the lettre wrote

And alle the venym of this cursed dede
But in what wise certaynly I not
The effecte is this that Alla oute of drede
His modre slough that men may playnly rede
For that she traytoure was to her ligeaunce
Thus endith olde donegylde with myschaunce
The sorowe that this Alla nyght and day
Maketh for his wif and for his chylde also
There is no tonge that it telle may
But nowe wol I to custaunce go
That fletyth in the see with peyne and wo
Fyue yere and more as lyketh cristes sonde
Or that her shippe approched to any londe
Vndre an hethen castel at the last
The whiche the name nat in text I fynde
Custaunce and ehe her childe the see vp cast
Almyghty god that saued alle mankynde
Haue on custaunce and her childe som myndе
That fallen is in hethyn honde eftsone
In poynte to spylle as I shalle telle you sone
Doun from the castel cometh there many a wight
To gauryn on this shippe and on custaunce
But shortly fro the castel on a nyght
The lordes steward god yeue him myschaunce
A theef that hadde renyed oure creaunce
Cam into the shippe alone and sayde he sholde
Her lemman be whether she wold or nolde
Tho was this wretchid woman wo begone
Her childe cryed and she cried pytously
But blissed mary helped her zight anone
For with her stroglyng wele and myghtyly
The thief fel ouer the borde al sodenly
And in the see he dreynt for vengeaunce

The Wyf of Bathes Tale

And thus hath crist vnwemmed kept custaunce
O foule lust of luxurie lo thyn ende
Nat only that thou faynte̅st mannys mynde
But verely thou wylt his body shende
The ende of thy werke or of thy lustes blynde
Is compleynyng hou many one may men fynde
That nat for werke somtyme but for thentent
To do this synne be other slayne or shent
Howe may this week woman haue that strengith
Her to defende ayenst the renegate
O golyas vnmesurable of lengithe
How myght dauid make the so mate
So ying of armure and so desolate
How durst he loke vpon thy face
Wele may men seen it is but goddes grace
Who yaue inditH corage or hardynesse
To slee him olifernes in his tent
And to delyuery out of wrechidnesse
The people of god I say to this entent
That right as god spyrite and vigoure sent
To them and saued them oute of myschaunce
So sent he strengith and vigoure vnto custaunce
Forth goth her ship througH oute the narowe mouthe
Of iubalter and septe dryuyng alwey
Somtyme west and somtyme north and southe
And somtyme Est ful many a wery day
Tyl cristes modre y blessed be she aye
Hath shapen througH her endlesse godenesse
To make an ende of alle her heuynesse
Now let vs stynt of custaunce but a throwe
And spekе we of Romayns the emperoure
That oute of Surry hath by lettres knowe
The slaughter of cristen folke and dishonoure

Doon vnto his doughter by a fals traytoure
I mene the curſed and wicked ſowdoneſſe
That at the feeſt leet ſle both more and leſſe
For whiche this Emperour hath ſent anone
His ſenatoure with ryalle ordenaunce
And other lordes god wote many one
Dy ſurryns to take high vengeaunce
They brynne and ſlee & bring them to myſchaunce
Ful many a day but ſhortly this is the ende
Homward to Rome they ſhapen them to wende
This ſenatoure repayreth with victory
To Rome ward ſeaking fulle ryally
And mette the ſhip dryuyng as ſayeth the ſtory
In whiche cuſtaunce ſat ful pytouſly
No thing knewe he what ſhe was ne why
She was in ſuche arraye that ſhe nyl ſey
Of her aſtate though ſhe ſhulde dey
He bringith her to Rome to his wif
He paue her to her and her yong ſonn alſo
And with the ſenatoure ſhe ladde her lyf
Thus can oure lady bring oute of wo
Cuſtaunce and many a nother mo
And long tyme duelled ſhe in that place
In holy werkes euer was her grace
The ſenatoures wif her ante was
But for alle that ſhe knewe her neuir the more
I wyl nolengere tary in this caas
But to king Alla whiche I ſpake of yore
For his wif wepith and ſigheth ſore
I wol retorne and pet I wyl cuſtaunce
Vndre the ſenatours gouernaunce
King Alla whiche that hadde his modre ſlayne
Vpon a day fyl in ſuche repentaunce

The Man of lawes Tale

And if I shortly telle shalle and pleyn
To Rome he cometh to receyue his penaunce
And put him in the popes ordenaunce
In high and lowe and Jesus crist besought
Forgeue his wycked workes that he hath wrought
The fame anone through Rome is born
How Alla king shal come in pygremage
By herbegeours that went him biforn
For whiche the senatoure as was the vsage
Rode him ayens and many of his lynage
As wele to shewen his magnificence
As to done any kyng reuerence
Grete chere doth this noble senatoure
To kyng Alla and he to him also
Euery of them doth to other grete honoure
And so befyl that on a day or two
This senatoure is to kyng Alla go
To fest shortly if I shal nat lye
Custaunces sonne went in his company
Som men wolde say at the request of custaunce
This senatoure had ledde this childe to fest
I may nat telle euery circumstaunce
Be as be may there was he at the leest
But soth it is right at his moders heest
Biforn Alla durynge the mete space
The childe stode lokynge in the kinges face
Alla the king of this childe hath grete wondre
And to the senatoure he sayde alone
Whose is this fayre childe that stondeth yondre
I not quod he by god and by seint John
A modre he hath but fadre hath he none
That I of wote and shortly in a stounde
He tolde Alla how the childe was founde

But god woot quod this senatoure also
So vertuous a lyuer in alle my lyf
Ne saw I neuir as she ne herde of mo
Of worldly wymen mayden wydowe or wif
I dar wele say she hadde leuer with a knyf
Through oute the breest than be a woman wyche
There is no man coude bring her to the pryche
Now was this childe as lyke vnto custaunce
As possible is a creature for to be
This alla hath the face in remembraunce
Of dame custaunce and theron mused he
If that the childes modre were ought she
That is this wif and pryuely he sight
And spedde him fro the table that he myght
Parfay quod he the fantom is in my hede
I ought to deme of rightfulle iugement
That in the salt see my wyf is dede
And afterward he made his argument
What wote I if crist haue her hidre sent
My wif by see aswele as he her sent
To my countre fro thens that she went
And after anone home with the senatoure
Goth alla for to se this woundre chaunce
This senatoure doth alla grete honoure
And hastely he sent after custaunce
But trust wele her lust nat for to daunce
Whan she wyste wherfore was that sonde
Vnnethes vpon her fete myght she stonde
Whan alla salwe his wif fayre he her grette
And wepte that it was routhe to see
For at the first loke that he on her sette
He knewe verely that it was she
And she for sorowe as dombe stondith as a tre

So was her herte shytte in her distresse
Whan she remembred of his vnkyndnesse
Thus she sowned in his owne sight
He wept and him excused pytously
Now god quod he and alle his halowes bright
So wisely on my soule haue mercy
That of youre harme as giltles am I
As is my sonne Maurice solyke youre face
Elles the fende me feche oute of this place
Long was the sobbyng and the byttre peyne
Or that her wofulle herte myght sece
Grete was the pyte for to here them playne
Throughe whiche playntes gan her wo encrece
I pray you alle my laboure to release
I may nat tel theire wo vntyl to morowe
I am so wery for to spelke of sorowe
But fynally whan the soth is wyst
That Alla gyltles is of her wo
I trowe an hundred tymes be they kyst
And suche a blisse is there betwixt them two
That saue the ioye that lastith euirmo
There is none lyke that any creature
Hath seen or shal whiles that the worlde may dure
Tho prayed she her husbond mekely
That in releef of her pytous peyne
That he wolde pray her fadre specially
That of his maieste he wolde enclyne
To vouchesauf som day with him to dyne
She prayed him eke he shulde by no wey
Vnto her fadre no worde of her say
Some men wolde seyn that the childe maurice
Doth this message vnto the Emperoure
But as I gesse Alla was nat so nyce

To him that is so souerayne of honoure
As he that is of cristes folke the floure
Sent any childe but it is best to deme
He went him selue and so it may wele seme
This emperoure hath graunted gentylly
To come to dynez as he him besought
And wele I suppose he loked besily
Upon this childe and on his doughtez thought
Ella goth vnto his Inne as him ought
Arayed for this feest in euery wise
As ferforth as his connyng may suffice
The morowe cam alla aud gan him dresse
And eke his wif the Emperoure for to mete
And forth they ryden in ioye and in gladnesse
And when she sawe hez fadre in the strete
She lyghteth doun and fallith him to fete
Fadre quod she youre yong childe custaunce
Is nowe ful cleen oute of youre remembraunce
I am youre doughtez Custaunce quod she
That whilom ye haue sent into surrye
Ik am I fadre that in the salte see
Was put allone and dampned for to dye
Now gode fadre mercy I you crye
Sende me nomoze into none hethnesse
But thankith my lozde here of his kyndnesse
Who can the pytous ioye telle alle
Betwiyt them thre sithen they be thus mette
But of my tale make an ende I shalle
The day goth fast I wyl no lengre lette
These glade folke to dynez be y sette
In ioye and blisse at mete I lette them duelle
A thousand folde wele moze than I can telle
This childe maurice was sithen empezoure

y made by the pope and lyued cristenly
To cristes chirche dyd he grete honoure
But I let al these stories passe by
Of custaunce is my tale specially
In olde Romaynes gestes men may wele synde
Mauricius lyf I here it nat in mynde
Thys kyng Alla whan he his tyme sey
With custaunce his holy wif so swete
To englonde be they come the right wey
Where as they lyuen in ioye and in quyete
But lytel while it lasted I you behete
Ioy of this worlde but tyme wyl nat abyde
Fro day to nyght it chaungith as the tyde
Who lyueth euir in suche delyte a day
That is ne meued either in conscience
Doire or talent or som kynnes affray
Enuye or pryde or passioun or offence
I ne say but for the ende of this sentence
That lytel while in ioye or plesaunce
Lastith the lyf of Alla With custaunce
For deth that taxith of high and lowe his rent
Whan passed was a yere euyn as I gesse
Dute of this worlde this kyng Alla is went
For whom custaunce hath ful grete heynesse
Now pray we to god his soule blisse
And dame custaunce fynally to say
Towarde the toun of Rome goth hir way
To Rome is come this holy creature
And fyndeth hir frendes there hole and sounde
Now is she scaped alle hir auenture
And whan she hir fadre hath y founde
Doun on hir knees fallith to grounde
Weppyng in herte for tenderesse blythe

She harpeth god an hundreth thousand sythe
In vertue and in holy almes dede
They lyuen alle and neuir a sondre wende
Tyl dethe departed them this lyf they lede
And faryth now wele my tale is at an ende
Nowe Jesus crist that of his myght may sende
Joye after wo gouerne vs in his grace
And kepe vs alle that been in this place

Here endith the may of lawes tale
And begynneth the Marchauntes prologe

Wepyng and waylyng care and other sorowe
I haue ynough both eupy and ehe a morowe
Quod the marchaunte and so haue other mo
That wedded be I trowe that it be so
For wele I wote it fareth so by me
I haue a wif the worst that may be
For though the feende cuppled to her were
She wolde him ouirmache I dar wele swere
What shulde I reherse in spectalle
Her high malice she is a shrewe with alle
Ther is a long and a large difference
Betwixt gryselidis grete pacience
And of my wif the passing cruelte
Were I vnbounde also mot I the
I wolde neuir efte come in thee snare
We wedded men lyue in sorowe and care
Assay who so wol and he shalle fynde
That I say sothe by seint thomas of ynde
As for the more parte I say nat alle
God shelde that it shulde so befalle
A gode sir hoost I haue wedded be

The Marchauntes Prologe

Theſe monethes two and more nat parde
And yet I trowe he that alle his lyf
Hath weddyd be though men him ryf
Into the hert ne coude in no maner
Telle ſo moche ſorowe as I now here
Coude telle of my wyues curſednesſe
Now quod oure hooſt marchaunte ſo god the bliſſe
Sithen ye ſo mekyl know of that arte
Ful hartely I pray you telle vs part
Gladly quod he but of myn owne ſore
For ſory hert I telle may nomore

Here endith the Marchauntes prologue
And here begynneth his Tale



W Hylom ther was dwellyng in lumbardy
A worthy knyght that born was at pauy
In whiche he lyued in grete proſperyte

And ly yere a wyfles man was he
And folowed ay his bodyly delyte
On women ther was his appetyte
As doon these foules that been secustere
And whan that he was passed ly yere
Were it for holyneſſe or for dotage
I can nat ſay but ſuche a grete corage
Hadde this knyght to be a wedded man
That day and nyght he doth alle that he can
To aſpye where he myght wedded be
Prayng oure lord graunt him that he
Myght onys knowe that blisful lyf
That is betwixt an husbond an his wyf
And for tolyue vndre the holy bonde
With whiche god firſt man and woman bonde
None other lyf ſayde he is worth a bene
For wedloke is ſo eaſy and ſoclene
That in this worlde it is a paradiſe
Thus ſayde this olde knyght that was ſo wiſe
And certaynly as ſothe as god is kyng
To take a wyf is a glorious thing
And namely whan a man is olde and hore
Than is a wyf the frute of the treſore
Than ſholde he take a yong wyf and a fayre
On whiche he myght engendre him an heire
And lede his lyf in ioy and in ſolace
Where as these bachelers ſyngen allas
Whan that they fynden eny aduerſite
In loue whiche nis but childes banyte
And truly it ſytteth wele to be ſo
That bacheleres haue peyne and wo
On brotyl ground they byld and brotylneſſe
They fynde freylte whan they wene ſykerneſſe

They lyue but as a byrde or as a beſt
In lybertye and vndre none areſt
There as a Wedded man in his aſtate
Lyueth his lyf blisful and ordynat
Vndre the yoke of mariage y bounde
Wele may his hert in ioye and blisſe habounde
For who can be ſo buxom as a wyf
Who is ſo trewe and eke ſo ententyf
To kepe him ſeke and hole as is his make
For Wele or Wo ſhe Wil him nat forſake
She is nat Wery him to loue and ſerue
Though that he lye bedred tyl he ſterue
And yet ſom clerkes ſayen it is nat ſo
Of Whiche he Theophraſte is one of tho
What force though theophraſt lyſt lye
Ne take no Wif quod he for huſbondrye
As for to ſpare in houſeholde thyn eyen ce
A trewe ſeruaunt doth more diligence
Thy gode to kepe than doth thy ſelue Wif
For ſhe Wyl clayme half part alle her lyf
And if that thou be ſeek ſo god me ſaue
Thy verry frendes or a true knaue
Wol kepe the bet than ſhe that Wayteth ay
After thy deth and hath done many a day
This ſentence and an hundred thinges worſe
Writeth this man there god his bones corſe
But take no kepe of ſuche vanyte
Do fye theophraſte and herkyn me
A Wif is goddes yeft verely
Alle other maner yeftes hardely
As londes rentes paſtures or comune
Or moebles alle ben yeftes of fortune
That paſſen as a ſhadowe on a Walle

But drede nat if I playnly spehe shalle
A wyf wil last and in thy house endure
Wele lengez than the lyst parauenture
Mariage is a fulle grete sacramnt
Who that hath no wif is but shent
He lyueth helples and is alle desolate
I spehe of folhe in seculez astate
And herhen why I say nat this foz nought
The woman is foz mannys helpe y wrought
The higth god whan he hadde Adam maked
And saw he him allone bely naked
God of his grete goodnesse sayde than
Let vs now make an helpe to this man
Lyhe to him selue and than he made eue.
Here may ye se and hezе by may ye prehe
That a wyf is mannys helpe and his comfozte
His paradyce terzestre and his disporte
So buxum and so bertuous is she
They must nedes lyue in vnyte
I flesshe they be and of o blode I gesse
Not but one herte in wil and in distresse
A wif a seinte Mary benedicite
How myght a man haue any aduersite
That hath a wif certes I can nat sey
The blisse that is betwixt them twey
There may no tong telle it oz hezt thynke
If he be poure she helpith him to swynke
She kepith his gode and wastith it neuir a dele
And alle that hez husbond lust she lyhith wele
She sayeth nat onys nay when he sayeth ye
Do this sayeth he al redy sir saythe she
O blissfulle ordre o wedloke precious
Thou art so mery and eke so bertuous

And so comended and approued ek̄e
That euery man that holt them worth a lek̄e
Upon his bare knees ought alle his lyf
Thankyng his god that him sent a wyf
Or elles pray god him for to sende
A wif to lest vnto his lyues ende
For than his lyf is set in syherne sse
He may nat be deceyued as I gesse
So that he worke after his wyues rede
Than may he boldly bere up his hede
They be so trewe and therto ek̄e so wyse
For whiche if thou wylt werche as the wyse
Do alway as the woman wol the rede
Lo hou iacob as these clerkes rede
By gode counseyl of his modre rebecke
Bonde the hyddes skynne aboute his necke
For whiche his faders benyson he wan
Lo iudith as the story wele tel can
By wyse counseyl she goddes people kept
And slewe him olifernes while he slept
Lo hou abygayl by gode counseyl that she
Saued her husbond Nabal whan that he
Shulde haue be slayne and lowe hester also
By gode counseyl delyuered oute of wo
The people of god and made mardoche
Of assure enhaunced for to be
There is no thyng in gre superlatyf
As sayeth senequyne aboue ony humble wif
Suffre thy wyues tong as caton byt
She shalle comaunde and thou shalt suffre it
And yet she wyl obey of curtesye
A wyf is kepar of thy husbondrye
Wele may the seheman bewayle and wepe

There as no wif is the house to hepe
I warne the if thou wilt wisely wirche
Loue wele thy wyf as crist loueth his chirche
If thou louest thy selue thou louest thy wyf
Noman hatyth his flesshe but in his lyf
He fostrith it and therfore bydde I the
Cherisshe thy wif or thou shalt neuir the
Husbond and wif what so men iape or pley
Of worldly folke holden the sikir wey
They been knytte they may no harme betyde
And namely vpon the wyues syde
For whiche this January of whiche I tolde
Considreth hath in his daies olde
The lusty lyf the vertuous quyete
That is in mariage hony swete
And for his frendes on a day he sent
To telle them the effecte of his entent
With face sadde he hath his tale to them tolde
He sayd frendes I am hore and olde
And almoost god woot at my pyttes brynke
Vpon my soule somwhat must I thynke
I haue my body folyly despended
Blyssed be god it shalbe amended
For I wolde be certayne a weddyd man
And that anone in alle the hast that I can
Vnto som mayde fayre and tendre of age
I pray you shapith for my mariage
Al sodenly for I wil nat abyde
And I wol sonde to aspye on my syde
To whom I may be weddid hastily
But for asmoche as ye be mo than I
ye shal rather suche a thyng aspyen
Than I where me lyst best alyen

But one thing I warne you my frendes dere
I wyl none olde wif haue in no manere
She shal nat passe vpi pere certayne
Olde fysshe & yong flesshe wolde I haue ful fayn
Bet is he sayde a pyke than a pyckerel
Bettre than olde beef is the tendre bele
I wol no woman of xxx yere of age
It is but bene straw and grete forage
And eke these olde wydowes godit wote
They can so mekyl craft in wadys bote
So mekyl broken harme what them lyst
That with them shulde I neuir lyue in rest
For sondry scoles maketh subtel clerkes
Woman of many a scole half a clerke is
But certaynly a yong thing may men gye
Right as men with hondes warm wey plye
Therfore I say you playnly in a clause
I wol none olde wyf haue for this cause
For if so were if I hadde suche myschaunce
That I myhez coude haue no plesaunce
Than sholde I lede my lyf in aboutrye
And so streyght to the deuyl whan I dye
Ne children shulde I none on hez getyn
yete hadde I leuyr houndes hadde me etyn
Than that myn heritage shulde falle
In straunge honde and thus I telle you alle
I doute nat I wote the cause why
Men sholde wedde and ferthermore woot I
There speketh many men of mariage
That wote nomore of it than doth my page
For whiche causes men sholde take a wyf
If he may nat lyuen chaste his lyf
Take him a wyf with grete deuocion

Bicause of lefulle procreacioun
Of children to the honoure of god aboue
And nat only for paramoure ne for loue
And for they ſhulde lechery eſchue
And yelde theire dette Whan that it is due
Or for eche of them ſhulde helpe other
In myſchief as the ſuſtre ſhalle the brodre
And lyue in chaſtite fulle holyly
But ſires by youre leue that am nat I
For god bethanked I dar make avaunt
I fele my lymes ſtarke and ſufficiaunt
To do alle that a man belongith to
And am ſtronge ynogh to ryde or go
Though I be hore I fare as doth a tre
That bloſometh or that frute y Woxen be
A bloſomed tre is neither drye ne dede
I fele me nowhere hore but on my hede
My herte and al my lymes been as grene
As laurer that through the yere is ſene
And ſithen ye haue herd al myn entent
I pray you that to my Wil ye aſſent
Of dyuerſe men dyuerſly him tolde
Of mariage many enſamples olde
Som blamed it ſom pryſed it certayn
But at the laſt ſhortly for to ſayn
As alday fallith alteracioun
Betwixt frendes in diſputacioun
There fyl a ſtryf bitwixt his brethern two
Of Whiche the one Was cleped Placebo
Juſtinus ſothly called Was that other
Placebo ſayd o January brother
Fullytel nede hadde ye my lorde ſodere
Counſeyl to aſke of any that is here

But that ye be one ſo ful of ſapience
That you ne lyketh for your high prudence
To weyul for the worde of ſalamon
This worde ſayed he to vs euerychone
Worke alle thing by counſeyl thus ſayed he
And thay ſhalt thou nat repente the
But though Salamon ſpake ſuche a worde
Myn owne dere brother and my lorde
So wiſely god my ſoule bring at reſt
I holde youre owne counſeyl for the beſt
For brother myn of me take this motyf
I haue now been a courtman alle my lyf
And yet god wote though I vnworthy be
I haue ſtonde in fulle grete and high degre
Aboute lordes in ful grete aſtate
yet hadde I neuir with none of them debate
I neuir contraried them truly
I wote wele that my lord can more than I
What that he ſayeth I holde it ferme and ſtable
I ſay the ſame or other thing ſemblable
A fulle grete fole is any counſeloure
That ſerueth a lorde of grete honoure
That dar preſume or onys thynke it
That his counſeyl ſholde paſſe his lordes wytte
Nay lordes be no foles by my fay
ye haue youre ſelue ſpoken here to day
So high ſentence ſo holy and ſo wele
That I conſent and conferme euery dele
youre wordes and al youre opunyon
By god ther is no man in this toun
Ne in ytalye conde better haue ſayde
Criſt holdith him of this ful wele apayed
And truly it is an high corage

Of any man that stept is in a age
To take a yong wif for by my fadre kynne
youre hert hongith vpon a ioly pyn
Doth now in this matere as ye lyst
For fynally I holde it for the best
Justinus that ay sat ful stylle and herde
Right on this wise he to placebo answerd
Now brother myn quod he be pacient I pray
Sithen ye haue sayde herkyn what I say
Seneke among other wordes wise
Sayeth that a man ought him right wele auyse
To whom he yeueth his londe or his catel
And sithnes I ought me auyse right wele
To whom I yeue my gode away from me
Wele moche more I ought for to auyse me
To whom I yeue my body for alwey
I warne you wele it is no childes play
To take a wyf without auysement
Men must enquere this is myn assent
Whether she be wise sobre or dronkelewe
Any oute goer or other wey a shrewe
A chidester or a waster of thy gode
Riche or poure or of maners wode
Al be it so that no man fynde shalle
None in this worlde that trottith hole in alle
Ne man ne beest suche as men can deuyse
But neuirthelesse it ought ynough suffice
With any wif if so that she hadde
More thewes gode than her vices badde
And al this asketh leyser to enquere
For god it wote I haue wept ful many a tere
Ful pryuely sithen I hadde a wif
Pryse who so wyl a wedded mannys lyf

Certayne I fynde it but coſt and care
And obſeruaunces of alle bliſſes bare
And yet god Wote my nyghboures aboute
And namely of Women many a route
Sayn that I haue the mooſt ſtedefaſt Wif
And eke the meke ſt one that berith lyf
But I Wote beſt Where Wringith me my ſho
ye may for me right as ye lyke doo
Aupſeth you ye be a man of age
How that ye entren into mariage
And namely With a yong Wif and a fayre
By him that made Water erthe and eyre
The yongeſt man that is in alle this route
Is beſy ynough to bring it aboute
To haue a Wif alone but truſtith me
ye ſhal nat pleſen hir only peres thre
This is to ſay to do hir full pleſaunce
A Wif aſkith full many an obſeruaunce
I pray you that ye be nat euyl apayed
Wele quod this January and haue ye ſayd
StraWe for thy ſeneke and thy prouerbes
I counte nat a panyer ful of herbes
Of ſcole termes Wiſer men than thou
As thou haſt herde hath ſentyd right noWe
To my purpoſe Placebo What ſay ye
I ſay he is a curſed man quod he
That lettyth matromonye ſikerly
And With that Worde they ryſen ſodenly
And been aſſentyd anone that he ſholde
Be Wedded Whan him lyſt and Where he Wolde
Hygh fantaſy and the beſy coueitouſneſſe
Fro day to day gan in the ſoule impreſſe
Of January aboute his mariage

Many faire ſhappe and many faire biſatte
There paſſith throughe his herte nyght by nyght
As who ſo tokē a myrroure poliſſhed brighte
And ſet it in a comon market place
Than ſhulde he ſe many a figure pace
By this myroure and in the ſame wiſe
Can January in with his thought deuyſe
Of maydens whiche duelled there beſide
He wiſt nat where he myght abyde
For if one hadde beaute in her face
A nother ſtont in the peoples grace
For her ſadneſſe and her benignyte
That of the people grete boyce hadde ſhe
And ſom were riche and had badde name
But neuirthele ſſe bitwixt erneſt and game
He at the laſt appoynted him in one
And lete alle othēr fro his herte gone
And choſe her on his owne auctoryte
For loue is blynde alday and may nat ſee
And whan he was in his bedde y brought
He poꝛtreyed in his herte and in his thought
Her freſſhe beaute and her age tendre
Her myddel ſmalle her armes long and ſlendre
Her wiſe gouernaunce and her gentylneſſe
Her womanly berynge and her ſadneſſe
And whan he was of her condeſcended
Him thought his choſe myght nat be amended
For whan he him ſelue concluded hadde
Him thought eche other mannys witte ſo badde
That impoſſible it were for to replye
Ayenſt his choyſe this was his fantaſye
His frendes ſent he to at his inſtaunce
And prayed them to do him that pleſaunce

That haſtely they Wolde to him come
He wolde abridge theire laboure alſo ſome
Nedith no moze foz him to go ne ryde
He was appoynted there he Wolde abyde
Placebo cam and ehe his frendes ſone
And alder firſt he badde them alle abone
That none of them none argumentes ſholde make
Ayenſt the purpos Whiche that he hadde y take
Whiche purpos Was pleſaunt to god ſayde he
And berry grounde of his proſperyte
He ſayde ther Was a mayden in the toun
Whiche that of beaute hadde grete renoun
Al were it ſo ſhe Was of ſmalle degre
Suffiſith him hez youth and hez beaute
Whiche mayde he ſayde he Wolde haue to his Wif
Tolede in eaſe and holyneſſe hiſelf
And thanke god that he myght haue hez alle
That no Wight With his bliſſe parten ſhalle
And prayed them to laboure in this nede
And ſhapen that he fayleth nat to ſpede
And than he ſayde his ſpyrite Was at eaſe
Than is quod he nothing me may diſpleſe
Saue one thing prickith me my conſcience
The Whiche I Wyl reherſe in youre preſence
ye haue herd ſayde ful long ſithnes agoo
Thez may no man haue parfite bliſſes tWo
This is to ſay in erth and ehe in heuyn
Foz thoughh he kept him fro the ſynnes ſeuyn
And ehe from euery braunche of that tre
yet is there ſo parfyte proſperyte
And ſo grete eaſe and luſt in mariage
That euez I am agaſt noW in myn age
That I ſhal lede noW ſo mery a lyf

So delicate Without Wo and ſtryf
That I ſhal haue my heuyn in erthe here
For ſithen verry heuyn is bought ſo dere
With tribulacion and grete penaunce
How ſholde they than that lyue in ſuche pleſaunce
As al Wedded men doon With theire Wyues
Come to the bliſſe there criſt eterne on lyue is
This is my drede and ye my brethern tWey
Aſſoyleth me this queſtion I you pray
Juſtinus Whiche that hatyd his foly
Aunſwerd anone right in his iapery
And for he Wolde his long tale abridge
He Wolde none other auctoryte aledge
But sayde ſir if ther be none obſtakyl
Of ther than this god of his high myracle
And of his mercy may ſo for you Wirche
That or ye haue youre rightes of holy chirche
ye may repente of Wedded mannys lyf
In Whiche ye ſay there is no Woo ne ſtryf
And elles god forbede but if he ſent
A Wedded man grace him to repent
Wele ofter rather than a ſyngle man
And therfore the beſt rede that I can
Diſpeyreth you nat but haue in memory
Parauenture ſhe may be youre purgatory
She may be goddes mene and goddes Whippe
Than ſhal youre ſoule by to heuyn ſhippe
Swifter than an arowe doth oute of a bowe
I hope to god hereafter ſhal ye knowe
That there nys none ſo grete felycite
In mariage ne neuer none ſhalbe
That you ſhal let of youre ſaluacion
So that ye vſe it as ſkyl is and reſon

The lustes of youre wif temporally
And that ye please hem nat to amourously
And that ye kepe youeke from others synne
My tale is done for my witte is thynne
Be nat agast herof my dere brother
But let vs wade fro this matere to an other
The wif of bathe if ye haue vnderstonde
Of mariage whiche I haue in honde
Declared hath ful wele in litel space
Fareth now wele god haue you in his grace
And with this worde he with his brother
Hath take his leue and eche of them of other
For whan they sawe it must nedes be
They wrought so by sligh and wise tretye
That this mayde whiche that may hight
As hastely as euir that she myght
Shal wedded be vnto Januarye
I trowe it were you long to tarye
If I you tolde of euery escripte and bonde
By whiche she was enfeoffed in his lond
Other for to herke of her riche arraye
But fynally comen is the day
That to the chirche bothe been they went
For to receyue the holy sacrement
Forth cometh the preest with stole aboute his necke
And badde her be lyke Sarra and rebecke
In wisdome and trouthe of mariage
And sayde his orysons in his vsage
And crouched them and badde god sholde them bles
And made al siker ynough with holynesse
Thus been they wedded with solempnyte
And at the feest sytteth he and she
With other worthy folke vpon the deys

Al fulle of ioye and blisse is the paleys
And ful of instrumentes and bytayle
The mooste deynteous of alle ytayle
Biforn him stode instrumentes of suche a soun
That Orphus ne of Thebes amphioun
Ne made neuer suche a melodye
At euery cours cam loude mynstralcye
That neuer ioab tromped for to here
Ne ther the theomodas half so clere
At thebes whan the cyte was in doute
Bachus the wyne them sheneth alle aboute
And venus lough vpon euery wight
For January was becomen her knyght
And wolde bothe assayen his corage
In libertye as ehe in mariage
And with her firebronde in her honde aboute
Daunsith biforn the bryde and alle the route
And certaynly I dar wele say right this
Emenyus that god of weddyng is
Saw neuer in his lyf so mery a wedded man
Holde thou thy peas thou poete marcian
That writest vs that ilke a wedding mery
Of hir philologye and of him mercurye
And of songes that the muses song
To smalle is bothe penne and ehe tong
For to discryuen of this mariage
Whan tendre youthe hadde wedded stoupyng age
There is suche myrthe that it may nat be writen
Assay youre selue and than may ye wytten
If that I lacke or none in this matere
May that sittyth with so benygne chere
Her to be holden it semeth a fayrye
Quene hester loked neuer with suche an eye

Dy assuere so mehe alohe as she
J may you nat deuyse al hez beaute
But thus mochе of hez beaute telle J may
That she Was lyke the bright mozow of May
fulfilled of al beaute and of plesaunce
This January is zaupsshed in a traunce
At euery tyme he lohed on hez face
But in his herte he gan hez manace
That he that nyght in armes Wolde hez streyne
Hardez than Paris euiz did Heleyne
But neuirtheleſſe yet hadde he grete pyte
That that nyght offende hez muſt he
And thought allas o tendre creature
Now Wolde god ye myght Wele endure
Al my corage it is ſo ſharpe and kene
J am a gaſt ye may it nat ſuſtene
But god forbede J dyd alle my myght
Nowe Wolde god it were Woye nyght
And that the nyght Wolde leſt euirmo
J Wolde that al this people Were ago
And fynally he doth alle his laboure
As he myght beſt ſauyng his honure
To haſt them fro the mete in ſubtel Wiſe
The tyme cam that reaſon Was to ryſe
And aftez that men daunſed and dranke faſt
And ſpices alle aboute the houſe they caſt
And ful of iope and bliſſe is euery man
Alle but a ſquyez that hight Damyan
Wſiche carft bifoze the knyght many a day
He Was ſo rauaſhed on his lady May
That foz the berry peyne he Was nygh Wode
Almooſt he ſWeltyd and ſWouned there he ſtode
So ſoze hath Venus hurte him With hez bronde

As that she bare it daunsyng in her honde
And to his bedde he went him hastely
Nomore of him at this tyme speke I
But there I lette him wepe ynough and pleyn
Tyl fresshe may wyl rewe vpon his peyne
O perlous fyre that in the bedstrawe bredith
O famyliers fo that his seruice bedith
O seruaunt traytoure fals homely hewe
Lyke to the addre sligh in bosom vntrewe
God sheld vs alle from youre acqueyntaunce
O January dronken in plesaunce
Of mariage. se how that thy Damyan
Thyn owne squyer and thy borne man
Entendith for to do the a velony
God graunte the thyn homely foo to aspy
For in this worlde nys worse pestilence
Than an homely fo alday in thy presence
Parfourmed hath the sonne his arke dyurne
Ne lengere may the body of him soiourne
On the orisont as in that latitude
Night with his mantel that is so derke and rude
Gan for to spede the emyspery aboute
For whiche departed is the lusty route
Fro January with thanke on euery syde
Home to theire houses lustely they ryde
There as they do thinges as them lyst
And when they se theire tyme they go to rest
Sone after this hastely this January
Wolde go to bedde he wolde no lengere tary
He drynkith ypocrace clarrey and vernage
And spices hote to encrese his corage
And many a lectuary hadde he ful fyne
Suche as the cursed monke dan constantyn

Hath Writen in his Bohe of coitu
To ete them alle he Wolde nothing eſcheu
And thus to his pryue frendes ſayde he
For goddes loue as ſone as it may be
Let Boyde al this houſe in curteſe Wiſe
And they haue done right as he Wolde deuyſe
Wen dronken and the trauers dreWe anone
This Bryde Was Brought to bedde as ſtylle as ſtone
And Whan the bedde Was With the preeſt bleſſid
Oute of the chambre hath euery Wight him dreſſid
And January hath faſt in armes take
His freſſhe may his paradiſe his make
He lullith hir he kiſſith hir ful ofte
With the Bryſſelles of his berd Bnſoft
Lyke to the ſtynne of hounde fyſſhe ſharp as Brere
For he Was ſhaue alle ne We in his manere
He rubbeth hir Bpon hir tendre face
And ſayde thus allas I muſt treſpace
To you my ſpouſe and you gretly offende
Or tyme come that I Wyl doun deſcende
But nathelesſe conſidreth Wele quod he
Thir is no Worh man What ſo euer he be
That may Worche Wele and haſtely
This Wolde be do at leyſer parfytly
It is no force hou long that We pley
In tre We Wedlohe coupled be We tWey
And blyſſed be the yohe that We be in
For in oure actes We may do no ſyn
A man may do no ſynne With his Wif
Ne hurte him ſelue With his oWne knyf
For We haue leue to pley Bs By the laWe
Thus lauBorith he tyl the day gan daWe
And than he takith a ſoppe in fyne clarze

And vp right in his bedde ſitteth he
And after that he ſong ful loude and clere
And hyſſith his wif and maketh wanton chere
He was al coltyſſhe and ful of ragery
And ful of iargon as is ſtiched pye
The ſtache ſhynne aboute his neche ſhaketh
While that he ſong ſo chaunteth he and craketh
But god wote what may thought in her herte
Whan ſhe ſawe him vp ſyttyng in his ſhert
In his nyght cappe and with his neche lene
Shе pryſeth nat his pleiyng worth a bene
Than ſayde he thus my reſt I wol take
Now day is come I may no lengre wake
And doun he leyde his hede and ſlepte tyl pryme
And after whan that he ſawe his tyme
Vp riſeth January but freſſhe may
Shе holdith her chambre tyl the fourth day
As vſage is of wyues for the beſt
For euery laboure ſomtyme muſt haue reſt
Or elles long may he nat endure
This is to ſay no lyues creature
Be it fyſſhe or byrde beſte or man
Now wyl I ſpeke of wofulle Dampan
That langureth for loue as ye ſhal here
Therfore I ſpeke to him in this manere
I ſay o ſely Dampan allas
Anſwere to this demaunde in this caas
How ſhalt thou thy lady freſſhe May
Telle thy woo ſhe wyl alwey ſay nay
Eke if thou ſpeke ſhe wol thy wo bewreyn
God be thy helpe I can no bettre ſeyn
This ſeeke Dampan in Venus grete fyre
So brennyth that he dyeth for deſyre

For whiche he puttyth his lyf in auenture
No lengere myght he in this wise endure
But pryuely a penner gan he borowe
And in a lettre wrote alle his sorowe
In maner of a complaynte or a lay
Vnto his fresshe and faire lady may
And in a purs of sylke hing it on his sherte
He hath y put and y leyde it on his herte
That January hath wedded fresshe may
The mone that at none was that day
Oute of Taure was in the Cankre slyden
So long hath mayus in hir chambre byden
As custome is vnto these nobles alle
A byrde shal nat etyn in the halle
Til daies foure or thre at the lest
Passed be than lette him go to feest
The fourth day complete fro none to none
Whan that the high masse was y done
In halle sat this January and May
As fresshe as is the bright somers day
And so befyl that this gode man
Remembrith him vpon this Dampan
And sayde seint mary how may this be
That dampan entendith nat to me
Is he ay seek or how may this betyde
His squyer whiche that stode him besyde
Excused him bicause of his seknesse
Whiche lettith him to do his besynesse
None other cause myght make him to tary
That me forthinketh quod this January
He is a gentyl squyer by my trouthe
If that he dyed it were harme and routhe
He is wise discrete honest and secre

As any man I wote of his degre
And therto manly and eke seruysable
And for to be a thrifty man right able
But after mete as sone as euir I may
I wyl my selue bisyte him and may
To do him al the comforte that I can
And for that worde him blissed euery man
That of his bountye and of his gentylnesse
He wolde so comforte in seuenesse
His squyer for it was a gentyl dede
Dame quod this January take gode hede
That after mete ye with youre women alle
Whan ye haue be in chambre oute of this halle
That alle ye go to se this Damyan
To do him disporte he is a gentyl man
And telleth that I wyl him bisyte
Haue I nothing but restyd me a lyte
And spede you fast for I wol abyde
Tyl that ye slepe fast by my syde
And with this worde he gan to him calle
A squyer that was marshal of his halle
And tolde him certayn thinges what he wolde
This fresshe may hath streight her wey holde
With alle her women vnto this damyan
Doun by his bedde syde anone sat she than
Comfortyng him as godely as she may
This damyan whan he his tyme say
In pryuy wise his purse and eke his byl
In whiche that he writen hadde alle his wyl
Hath put into her honde withouten more
Saue that he sighed right wonderly sore
And softly to her right thus sayde he
Mercy and that ye discouer nat me

For I am dede if that this thing be kyd
This kyl had she in her bosom kyd
And wente her wey ye get nomore of me
Vnto January comyn there is she
And on his beddes syde sat ful softe
He takith her and kyssith her ful oft
He leyde him down to slepe and that anone
She feyned her as that she must gone
There as ye wote euery wight must nede
And whan she of this kylle hath take hede
She rente it alle to cloutes and at the last
In the pryue softly she hath it cast
Who studieth now but fayre fresshe may
And down by olde January she lay
That slept tyl the cowgh hath him awaked
Anone he prayed her to stripe her naked
He wolde of her he sayde haue som plesaunce
He sayde her clothes dyd him encumbraunce
And she obeyeth be she leef or lothe
But lest that precious folke with me be wrothe
How that he wrought I daz you nat telle
Or whether her thought it paradise or helle
But I lette them wirche in theire wise
Tyl euyn song and that they must aryse
Were it by destyne or by auenture
Were it by influence or by nature
Or constillacioun that in suche astate
The heuyn stode that tyme fortunat
Was for to put a kyl in venus werkes
For alle thing hath tyme as sayen clerkes
To any woman for to gete her loue
I can nat say but the grete god aboue
That knowith that none acte is causeles

He demeth al for I wyl holde my peace
But soth it is how that this fresshe may
Hath take suche impressioun that day
Of pyte of this seke man Dampan
That fro her hert she it dryue ne can
The remembraunce for to do him ease
Certayn thought she whom this thing displease
Where reche nat I him assure
To loue him best of any creature
Though he nomore hadde than his shert
Lo pyte renneth sone in gentyl herte
Here may ye here how excellent fraunchise
In women is Whan they them narowe auyse
Some tyrannt ther is as ther be many one
That hath an herte as hard as any stone
Whiche wolde haue let him sterue in the place
Wele rather than haue graunted him grace
And them reioysen in theire cruel pryde
And recked nat to be an homycyde
This gentyl may fulfilled of al pyte
Right so of her honde a lettre made she
In whiche she graunted him her verry grace
Ther lacketh nought but only day and space
Where that she mygth to his lust suffise
For it shal be right as he wol deuyse
And Whan she sawe her tyme vpon a daye
To visyte this Dampan goth this fresshe may
And subtelly a lettre doun she thriste
Vndre his pylowe rede it if him lyst
She taketh him by the houde and herd him twyst
So secretly that noman it wyste
And badde him be alle hole and forth she went
To January Whan that he for her sent

Up riſeth dampan the next morowe
Al paſſed was his ſekenes and his ſorowe
He nembith him and proyneth him and pyhith
He doth al that his lady luſt and liketh
And eke to January he goth as lowe
As euir dyd a dogge for the bowe
He is ſo pleſaunt to euery man
For craft is alle Who ſo that it can
That euery wight is fayne to ſpeke him gode
And fully in the ladies grace he ſtode
Thus let I dampan aboute his nede
And in my tale forth I wyl procede
Some clerkes holden that felycite
Stondith in delyte and therfore certayn he
This noble January With alle his myght
In honeſt Wiſe as longith to a knyght
Shope him to lyue ful deliciouſly
His houſyng his arraye as honeſtly
To his degre Was made as a kynges
Among other of his honeſt thinges
He hadde a gardeyn walled alle With ſtone
So fayre a gardeyne wote I nowhere none
For oute of doute I verily ſuppoſe
That he that Wrote the romaynes of the Roſe
Ne coude of it the beaute wele deuyſe
Ne priapus ne myght nat ſuffiſe
Though he be god of gardeyns for to telle
The beaute of the gardyn and the Welle
That ſtode vndre a laurer alwey grene
Ful oft tyme kinȝ pluto and his quene
Proſerpyna and alle her feyrye
Diſporten them and make melodye
Aboute that Welle and daunſed as men tolde

This noble knyght this January the olde
Suche deynte hath in it to walken and to pley
That he wolde suffre no wight to bere the key
Saue he him selue for of the smale wyket
He bare alwey of sylues a clyket
With the whiche whan he lyst vnshytte
And whan he wolde paye his wif his dette
In somer season thider wolde he go
And may his wif and no wight but they two
And thinges that were nat do a bedde
He in the gardeyn parfourmed it and sped
And in this wise many a mery day
Lyuen this January and fresshe may
But worldly ioye may nat alwey endure
To January ne no worldly creature
O sodeyn happe o thou fortune vnstable
Lyke vnto the scorpyon so deceyuable
That flaterst with thy hede whan thou wilt stynge
Thy tayle is deth through thyn enuenymynge
O vnstedfast ioye o thou suete poyson queynte
O tohu monstre that subtelly canst peynte
Thy gifte so vndre hewe of stedefastnes
That thou deceyuest bothe more and lesse
Why hast thou January thus deceyued
That haddest him for thy frende receyued
And now thou hast beraft bothe his eyen
For sorowe of whiche he desireth to dyen
Alias this January that is so fre
Amyd his lust and his prosperite
Is now woxen blynde and that al sodenly
He wepeth and he waylyth pytously
And therwithalle the fyre of Jelousye
Lest that his wif shalle fal in some folye

So brent his hert that he wolde fayne
That some may bothe him and her hadde slayne
For neuir after his deth ne his lyf
Ne wolde he that she were loue ne wyf
But euirlyue as a widowe in clothes blake
Sool as the turtyl that hath lost her make
But at the last after a moneth or twey
His sorowe gan to swage soth to sey
For he wyst it may none other be
He pacientlye tok his aduersite
Saue oute of doute may he nat forgoon
That he ne was ielous euirmore in oon
Whiche ielousye it was so outrageous
That neither in halle ne in other hous
Ne in none other place neuir the moo
He wolde suffre her for to ryde ne go
But if that he hadde honde on her alwey
For whiche ful ofte weppyth fresshe may
That loueth Dampan so tenderly
That she must other dye sodenly
Or elles she must haue him at her leste
She wayteth whan her hert wolde to brest
Upon that other syde this dampan
Becomen is the sorowfullest man
That euir was for neither nyght ne day
Ne myght he spek a worde with fresshe may
as of his purpos of none suche mater
But if that January must it here
That hadde an honde upon her euirmo
But neuirtheles by writyng to and fro
And pryue signes wyst he what she ment
And she knewe of the same his entent
O January what myght it the anayle

Thoughe thou myghteyst se as fer as ſhip doth ſayle
For as gode blynde is deceyued to be
As to be deſceyued whan a man may ſe
Lo argus whiche that hadde an hundreth eyen
For al that euir he coude poure or pryen
yet was he blent and god wote ſo be mo
That wenyn wele that it is no thing ſo
Paſſe ouir this and ceaſe I ſay nomore
This freſſhe may of whiche I ſpake of yore
In warm wey hath prentyd this clyket
That January baar of the ſmale wyket
By whiche vnto his gardeyn oft he went
And Dampan that knewe her entent
The cleket countrefetyd pryuely
There is nomore to ſay but haſtely
Some wondre by this clyket ſhal be tyde
Whiche ye ſhal here if ye wyl abyde
O nobie ouyde ſoth ſayeſt thou god wote
What ſtight it is thoughe it be long and hote
That he nyl fynde it oute in ſome manere
By pryamus and tyſby may men here
Thoughe they were kept ſtreyt long ouir alle
They been accorded rownyng throughe a walle
There no wight coude haue founde ſuche a ſlight
But now to purpos or that daies eyght
Were paſſed or the moneth of Juyl befylle
That January hath caught ſo grete a wylle
Throughe eggyng of his wif him for to ylep
In his gardeyn and no wight but they twey
That in a morowe vnto this may ſayde he
Ryſe vp my wif my loue my lady fre
The turteles voyce I herd my ſpouſe ſwete
The wynter is gone with his raynes wete

Come forth with thyn eyn columbyne
Now fayrer been thy eyen than is wyne
The gardeyne is closed al aboute
Come forth my swete spouse oute of doute
Thou hast me wounded in myn herte o wyf
No spot of the ne hne wem Jin al my lyf
Come forth and let vs take oure disporte
Jchees the for my wyf and for my comforte
Suche olde lewde wordes vsed he
Dy dampan a signe made she
That he sholde go biforne with his clehet
This Dampan hath opned the wyket
And in he stert and that in suche manere
That no wight myght it see ne here
And stylle he sat vndre a bussche anone
This January is blynde as is a stone
With may in his honde and no wight moo
Jn to this fresshe gardeyn is he goo
And clapped to the wyket sodenly
Now wif quod he here nys but thou and J
That art the creature that J best loue
For by that lorde that sytteth vs al aboue
J hadde leuyr right nowe dye on a knyf
Than the offenden myn owne dere wyf
For goddes sake thynke hou J the chese
Nat for couetyse ne other gode doutles
But only for the loue J hadde to the
And though that J be olde and may nat se
Be to me trewe and J wyl tel the why
Certes thre thinges shulde ye wynne therby
First loue of crist and to youre selue honoure
And alle myn heritage bothe toun and toure
J yeue it you makith charters as you lyst

This ſhal be do to morowe or the ſonne riſte
So wiſely god my ſoule bryngte to blys
And I pray you of couenaunt ye me kyſſe
And though I be ielous wyte me nought
ye be ſo depe prynted in my thought
That whan I conſidre youre beaute
And therwith al the bnkyndly eld of me
I may nat certes though I ſhulde dye
Forbere to been oute of youre companye
For verry loue this is withouten doute
Now kyſſe me wyf and let bs roume aboute
This fresſhe may whan ſhe the wordes herde
Benygnely to January aunſwerde
But firſt and forward ſhe began to wepe
I haue quod ſhe a ſoule for to kepe
As wele as ye and alſo myn honoure
And of my wifhode that tendre floure
Whiche that I haue aſſured in youre honde
Whan that the preeſt to you my body bonde
Wherfore I wyl aunſwere in this manere
With the leue of you my lorde ſo dere
I pray to god that neuir da we that day
That I ne ſterue as foule as woman may
If euir I do to my kynne that ſhame
Or elles that I empeyre ſo my name
That I be fals and if I do that lache
Do ſtripe me and put me in a ſache
And in the next ryuer do me drenche
I am a gentyl woman and no wynche
Why ſpeke ye thus but men be euir bntrue
And women haue repreef of you ay newe
ye can none other comunycacioun I leue
But ſpeke to bs of bntruſt and bs repreue

And with that worde she sawe where Damyan
Sat in a busshe and knele he began
And with her fyngers signes made she
That damyan sholde clymbe vp on a tre
That charged was with frute and vp he went
For verely he knewe al her entent
And euery signe that she coude make
Wele bet than January her owne make
For in a lettre she hadde tolde him al
Of this matere how he wirche shalle
And thus I let him syt in the perye
And January with may roumyng mery
Right was the sonne and blewe the firmament
Phebus of golde doune his beames hath sent
To gladen euery floure with his warmnesse
He was that tyme in gemynis as I gesse
But lytel fro his declynacioun
Of Cancer iouis exaltacioun
And so it fyl in a bright morowe tyde
That in the garden on the ferther syde
Pluto that is king of the feyrye
And many a lady in his company
Folowing his wif the quene proserpyne
Ech after other right as any lyne
Whiles that she gadred floures in a mede
In claudyan ye may the storyes rede
How in his grysely carte he her fette
This kyng of feyrye adoun him sette
Vpon a benche of turues fayre and grene
And right anone sayde he thus to his quene
My wif quod he ther may no wight say nay
The experience so proueth it euery day
The treason whiche that women do to man

Ten hundreth thousand tellen I can
Ensamples and of youre entrouthe & brotylnesse
O Salamon wise and richest of alle richesse
Fulfilled of sapience and of worldly glory
Wele worthy be thy wordes in memory
To euery wight that wyt and reason can
Thus prysethe he yet the bounte of man
Among a thousand men yet fonde I one
But of alle women yet fonde he neuir none
Thus sayd the king that so knowith youre wikednes
And Jesus filius Sirach as I gesse
Ne spekith of you but seldyn reuerence
A wylde fyre and a corrupte pestilence
So falle on youre bodies yet to nyght
Ne se ye nat this honourable knyght
Bicause allas that he is blynde and olde
His owne man shal make him cokecolde
Lo where he sitteth the lickoure in the tre
Now wol I grannte of my magestye
Unto this olde blynde worthy knyght
That he shal haue agayn his eyen sight
Whan that his wif wolde do him vilony
Than shal he knowe alle her lerotry
Bothe in repreef of her and other mo
ye shal quod Proserpina and wil ye so
Now by my modris soule sir I swere
That I shal yeue her sufficiaunt aunswere
And al women after for her sake
Though they be in any gylt y take
With face bolde they shal them selue excuse
And bere him doun that wolde them accuse
For lacke of aunswere none of them shal dyen
Al hadde he seen a thing with bothe his eyen

yet ſhal we women ſo biſatte it hardely
And wepe and ſwere and chide ſubtelly
So that ye men ſhal be as lewde as gees
What reckith me of youre auctoritees
I wote wele this Jewe this Salamon
Fonde of vs women mo foules than one
But though he ne fonde no gode woman
yet haue ther founde many a nother man
Women fulle true ful gode and vertuous
Wytnes of them that duelle in criſtes houſe
With martyrdome they preuyd theire conſtaunce
The Romayne geſtes ne make remembraunce
Of many a very true wif alſo
But ſir ne be nat wrothe alſo
Al though he ſayde he fonde no gode woman
I pray you take the ſentence of the man
He ment thus that in ſouerayne bounte
Nys none but god that ſitteth in trinyte
Ey for very god that nys but one
What make ye ſo moche of Salamone
What though he made a temple goddes houſe
What though he were riche and gloryus
So made he eke a temple of falſe goddes
How myght he do a thing that more forbode is
Parde as fayre as ye his name enplaſtre
He was a lechoure and e he ay ydolaſtre
And in his elde he very god forſoke
And if god ne hadde as ſayeth the boke
yſpared for his faders ſake he ſholde
Haue loſt his reigne rather than he wolde
I reue right nought of alle the bely
That he of women writeth a vutter ſkye
I am a woman nedes I muſt ſpeke

Orelles swelle tyl my herte to breke
For sithen ye say that we be iangeleresses
As euir I mot brouke hole my tresses
I shal nat spare nouwe for no curtesye
To speke him harme that wolde vs belony
Dame quod this pluto be ne lengere wrothe
I yeue it vp but sithen I swere myn oth
That a wyl graunte him his sight ageyn
My worde shal stonde I say you certayn
I am a kyng it sytteth me nat to lye
And I a quene quod she of the feyrye
Her aunswere shal she haue I vndertake
Let vs no moo wordes herof make
Forsoth I wyl you no lengere contrary
Now let vs turne agayn to January
That in the gardeyn with his fresshe may
Syngeth ful meryer than the poppyngeay
you loue I best and shal and other none
So longe aboute the aleys is he gone
Tyl he was come ayenst that ilke pery
Where as this Dampan sytteth ful mery
And high among the fresshe leuys grene
This fresshe may that is so bright and shene
Gan for to sigh and sayde allas my syde
Now sir quod she for aught that may betyde
I must haue of the perys that I se
Or I must dye so sore longith me
To ete of the smale perys grene
Helpe for her loue that is of heuyn quene
I telle you wele a woman in my plyte
May haue in frute so grete an appetyte
That she may dye but she of it haue
Allas quod he that I ne hadde here a knaue

That coude clymbe allas allas quod he
But I am blynde ye sir no force quod she
But Wolde ye vouchsauf for goddes sake
The pery Within youre armes for to take
For Wele I Wote that ye mystrust me
Than sholde I clymbe Wele ynough quod she
So I my fete myght set vpon youre bake
Certes quod he therof shal be no lake
Myght I you helpyn With my herte blode
He stoupith down and on his bake she stode
And caught her by a twiste and vp she gothe
Ladies I pray you be nat Wrothe
I can nat glose I am a rude man
And sodenly anone this dampan
Gan pulle vp the smoke and in he throng
And Whan that pluto sawe that Wrong
To January yaue ayen his sight
And made him se as Wele as euir he myght
And Whan that he had caught his sight agayn
Ne Was no man of thing so fayne
But on his Wif his thought Was euirmo
Vp to the tre he castith his eyen two
And sawe how dampan his Wif hath dressed
In suche manir it may nat be expressed
But if I Wolde spekе vncurtesly
Oute helpe allas harrowe he gan crye
O stronge lady store What dost thou
And she answered sir What ayleth you
Haue pacience and reason in youre mynde
I haue you holpen of bothe youre eyen blynde
Vp peril of my soule I shalle nat lien
As me Was taught to helе With youre eyen
Was no thing bette to make you to se

Than for to ſtrogyl With a man in a tre
God Wote I dyd it in ful gode entent
Strogyl quod he. ye algate in it Went
God yeue you bothe a ſhamys deth to dyen
He dyd right ſo I ſaWe it With myn eyen
And elles I be hanged by the hals
Than is quod ſhe my medicyne fals
For certaynly if ye myght ſee
ye Wolde nat ſay theſe Wordes to me
ye haue ſome gle myſyng and no perfyte ſight
I ſe quod he aſWele as euir I myght
Thanked be god With both myn eyen tWo
And by my trouthe me thought he dyd ſo
ye maas gode ſyr quod ſhe
This thanke haue I for I made you ſee
Allas quod ſhe that euir I Was ſo hynde
Now dame quod he let al paſſe oute of mynde
Come doune my leef and if I haue myſſayde
God helpe me ſo as I am euyl apayed
But by my fadre ſoule I Went haue ſeyn
How that this dampan hadde by the leyn
And that thy ſmoke he leyde Upon his Breeſt
ye ſir quod ſhe ye may Wene as ye leſt
But ſir quod ſhe a man that Wakith of his ſlepe
He may nat ſo ſodenly take hepe
Upon a thing ne ſe it ſo parfytly
Tyl that he be Wele ada Wed herely
Right ſo a man that long blynde hath be
Ne may nat ſodenly ſo ſone Wele ſe
Firſt Whan his ſight is comyn agayne
As he that hath a day or tWeyne y ſeyn
Tyl that youre ſight y ſatelyd be a While
Ther may ful many a ſight you begyle

Bewaar I pray you for by heuyn kyng
Fulle many a man wenyth to se a thing
And yet it is al another than it semeth
He that my sconceyueth oft mys demeth
And with that worde she lept fro the tre
This January who is gladde but he
He kyssith her and clepith her fulle oft
And on her wombe he strikith her ful soft
And to his paleys home he hath her ladde
Now gode men I pray you be mery and gladde
Thus endith here my tale of January
God blisse vs alle and his modre Mary

Here endith the marchauntes tale
And folowith the Squyers prologue

O Oure hoost in his stiroppes stondith anone
And sayde gode men herkneth euerichone
This was a sharpe tale for the nones
Sir parisshe preest quod he for goddes bones
Tel vs a tale as was thy forward yore
I se wele that laboured men in lore
Knowe moche thing by goddes digny te
The parson him aunswerd benedicite
What ayleth the man so sinfully to swere
Oure hoost aunswerde o Jankyn be ye there
I smelle a lollere in the wynde quod he
Now gode men quod oure hoost herkneth me
Abydith for goddes digne passioun
For we shal haue now a predicacioun
This lollare wyl preche vs here somwhat
Nay by my fadre soule that shal be nat
Sayde the Squyer he shal nat here preche

He ſhal no goſpel gloſe here ne teche
We leue al in the grete god quod he
He wolde ſowe ſom difficultye
Or ſprynge cokyl in oure clene corn
And therfore hooſt I warne the biforn
My holy body ſhal a tale telle
And I ſhalle clynke you a holy belle
That it ſhal walkyn alle this company
But it ſhal nat be of philoſophy
Ne of phyſlias ne termes queynte of lawe
There is but lytel latyn in my mawe

Here endith the ſquyers prologue
And here begynneth his Tale



A T ſurrye in the londe of Tartary
There dwelled a kinge that warred ruſſy
Throughout whiche ther dyed many a doughty man

That noble kynge was cleppyd Cambuscan
Whiche in his tyme was of so grete renoun
That ther was nowhere in no regioun
So excellent a lorde in alle thing
Fro lacked naught that longed to a kynge
As of the secte of whiche he was born
He kepte his lay to whiche he was sworne
And therto he was hardy wise and riche
Pytous iust and alwey ylyche
Soth of his worde benygne and honourable
Of his corage as any centre stable
yonge fresshe strong in armes desirous
As any bachelor duelling in his house
A fayre persone he was and fortunate
And kept alwey so wele royalle estate
That there was nowhere suche a man
This noble kynge this tartyr Cambuscan
He hadde two sonnes on alphete his wyf
Of whiche the eldest highte Algarsyf
That other sonne was cleped camballo
A doughter hadde this worthy king also
That yongest was and highte Canace
But for to telle you of her beaute
It lyth nat in my tonge ne in my connynge
I daar nat take on me so high a thing
And also myn englysshe ne is insufficient
It must be a clerke and a rethour excellent
That knewe the coloures longing to that arte
If I sholde discryue her in euery parte
I am no suche I must speke as I can
And so befyl this cambuscan
Hath twenty wynter born his dyademe
As he went fro yere to yere y deme

He leet the feste of his natiuyte
Done cry throughe oute Sarap the cyte
The last Idus of Marche after the yere
Phebus the sonne fulliely Was and clere
For he Was nyghe his exaltacioun
In martis face and in his mansioun
In aries the hote colerike signe
Full lusty Was the Wether and benygne
For Whiche the foules ayenst the sonne shene
What for the seasoun and the yonge grene
Full loude songe theire affectiouns
Them semed to gettyn them protectiouns
Ayenst the swerde of Wynter kene and colde
This cambuscan of Whiche I you tolde
In rialle Vestmentes sat on his deys
With diademe full highe in his paleys
And helde his feste so solempne and riche
That in this Worlde Was there none it liche
Of Whiche if I sholde telle al the aray
Than Wolde it occuppe a someres day
And eke it nedith nat to deuyse
At euery cours the ordre of theire seruyse
I Wyl nat telle of theire straunge sewys
Ne of theire swannys ne of theire heronsewes
Eke in that londe as telleth knyghtes olde
Is some mete that is ful deynte holde
That in this londe men reche of it but smalle
There is no man that may reporten alle
I Wol nat tary for it is pryme
And for it is no frute but losse of tyme
Vnto my first tale I Wol haue my recours
And so befyl that after the thridde cours
While this kyng sat thus in his nobleye

Herknyng his mynstralles theire thinges pley
Biforn him at his borde deliciously
In at the halle dore al sodenly
There cam a knyght vpon a stede of brasse
And in his honde a brode myrrour of glas
Vpon his thombe he hadde of golde a ryng
And by his syde a naked swerd hanging
And vp he ryded to the high borde
In al the halle ne was there spoke a worde
For meruayle of this knyght him to beholde
And bisely they wayten yong and olde
The straunge knyght that cam so sodenly
Al armed saue his hede ful richely
Saluyth kyng quene and lordes alle
By ordre as they sytten in the halle
With so high reuerence and obeysaunce
As wele in speche as in countenaunce
That Gawen with his olde curtesye
Though he were come agayn oute of fayrye
Ne coude him amende with a worde
And after this biforn the high borde
He with manly voyce sayde his message
After the fourme vsed in his langage
Without vyce of sillable or lettre
And for his tale shulde seme the bettre
Accordaunt to his wordes was his chere
As techith arte of speche them that it lere
Al be it that I can nat sounde his style
Ne I can nat clymbe on so high a style
Than say I thus to the comon entent
Thus moche amounteth alle that he ment
If it so be that I haue it in mynde
He sayde the kyng of arabye and of ynde

My liege lorde on this solempne day
Saluyth you as he best can and may
And sendith you honoure at youre fest
By me that am al redy at youre hest
This stede of brasse that easily and wele
Can in the space of a day naturel
This is to say in foure and twenty houres
Where you lyst in droughte or in shoures
Bere youre body into euery place
To whiche youre herte wylneth for to pase
Withonte wem of you throughe foule or fayre
Or if you lyst to fle as high in the eyre
As doth an egle whan him lyst to sore
This same stede shal bere you euirmore
Withoute harme tylye be there ye lyst
Though that ye slepe on his backe or rest
And turne agayn with wryng of a pyn
He that it wrought coude many a tyn
He wayted many a constellacioun
Or that he hadde wrought his operacioun
And knewe many a seale and many a bonde
This myrroure eke that I haue in myn honde
Hath suche a myght that men may in it se
Whan there shal falle any aduersite
Vnto youre reigne or vnto youre selue also
And openly who is youre frende or foo
And ouer al this if any lady bright
Had set her hert on any manere knyght
If he be fals she shal his treason se
His newe loue and alle his subtelte
So openly that there shal no thing hyde
Wherfore ayenst this lusty somers tyde
This myrroure and this ryng as ye may se

He sent hath to my lady Cenace
youre excellent doughter that is here
The vertue of this ryngge if ye wol here
Is this. if that it lyst her for to were
Upon her thombe or in her purse it bere
There is no foule that fleeth vndre heuyn
That she ne shalle vnderstonde his steuyn
And knowe his menyng openly and playn
And aunswere him in his langage agayn
And euery gras that growith vpon the rote
She shal knowe and whom it wol do bote
Al be his wounde neuir so depe or wyde
This naked swerd that hangith by my syde
Suche vertue hath that what man ye smyte
Throughe oute his armure it wol kerue and byte
Were it as thicke as a braunched oke
And what man is wounded with the stroke
He shalle neuir be hole tyl pe list of grace
To stryke him with the platte in the same place
There he is hurt that is as mekyl to sayn
ye must with the plat swerde agayn
Stryke him in the wounde and it wol close
This is verry soth withouten glose
It fayleth nat whiles it is in youre holde
And whan the knyght hadde thus his tale tolde
He rode oute of the halle and doun he light
His stede whiche that shone as the sonne bright
Stondith in the courte stylle as any stone
This knyght into the chambre is led anone
And is vnarmed and to mete y sette
The presentes be right richely fette
This is to say the swerd and the myrroure
Been born anone to the high toure

With certayne officers demed therfore
And vnto Canace this ryng is bore
Solemnely there she sat at the table
But siherly Withouten any fable
The horse of bras that may nat be remeuyd
It stont as it were in the grouude y cleuyd
They may it nat oute of the place dryue
For none engynes wyndas ne polyue
And cause why for they can nat the craft
And therfore in the place they haue it laft
Tyl that the knyght haue taught them the manere
To voyden him as ye shal after here
Grete was the prees that swermyd to and fro
To gawren on the horse that stode so
For it so high was so brode and so long
So wele proporcioned to be strong
Right as it were a stede of lumbardy
Therwith so horsely and so quyche at eye
As it a gentyl poleyn courser were
For certes fro his tayle vnto his ere
Nature ne arte conde him nat amende
In no degre as alle the people wende
But euirmore theire mooste wondre was
How it conde go and was of bras
It was a fayre as al the people semed
Dyuerse folke dyuersly they demed
As many hedes as many wyttes there been
They mormyd as doth a swarme of been
And maken shyldes after theire fantesye
Reherseyng of the olde poetrye
And sayde it was lyke the pegase
The horse that hadde wynges for to fle
Or elles it was the grekes horse Synon

That brought troye vnto distruction
As men in olde gestes rede
Myn hert quod one is euirmore in drede
I trowe som men of armes be therin
That shape them this cyte for to wynne
It were right gode that alle suche thing were knowe
Another rowned to his felawe lowe
And sayde he lyed for it was rather lyke
An apparence made by som magyke
As iogloures pleyn at the festes grete
Of sondry doutes they iangel and trete
As lewde people deme alday comonly
Of thinges that been made more subtelly
Than they can in their lewdnesse comprehende
They demen gladly to the badder ende
And som of them wondred on the myrrour
That born was vp in the mayster toure
How men myght in it suche thinges se
An other answerd and sayde it myght wele be
Naturally made by compositiouns
Of aungels and of sly reflectiouns
And sayde that in rome was suche one
They spake of alocen and of vytelone
And of aristotle that writen in their lyues
Of queynte myrrours and of prospectatyues
As knowe they that haue their bokes herde
And other folke haue wondred on the swerd
That wol perysshe through euery thing
And felle in speche of thelephus the king
And of achilles with his queynte spere
For he coude with it bothe hele and dere
Right in suche wise as men may with the swerde
Of whiche right nowe ye haue youre selue herd

They ſpeken of ſondry hardyng of metal
And ſpeken of medicynes therwithalle
And hou and whan it ſholde hardyd be
Whiche vnknowe is algate to me
Tho ſpeke they than of Canaces ryngle
And ſayde that al ſuche wondre thing
Of craft of rynges herde they neuir noon
Saue that he moyſes and king Salamon
Hadde a maner connyng of ſuche an arte
Thus ſayn the people and drawen them a parte
But neuirtheles ſom ſayde that it was
Wonder to make of fern aſſhes glas
And yet is glas nat lyke aſſhen of fern
But for they haue knowe it ſo fern
Therfore ſeſith ther iangling and ther woudre
As ſore wondre ſome on cauſe of the thundre
On ebbe and floode on goſſomer and on myſt
And on alle thing tyl the cauſe is wyſt
Thus iangel they and demyn and deuyſe
Tyl that the kyng han from his borde aryſe
Phebus hath loſt the angle merydional
And yet aſcendyng was the beſt ryalle
The gentyl lyoun with his aldryan
Whan that this tartyr kyng Cambuſcan
Roſe from his borde there he ſat ful hye
Biforn him goth the loude mynſtralcye
Tyl that he cam to his chambre of paramentes
There as they ſownyn dyuers inſtrumentes
That is lyke an heuyn for to here
Now daunſen lusty venus childreu dere
For in the fyſſhe theire lady ſat ful hye
And loked on them with a frendly eye
Tyl the noble kyng is ſet vpon his trone

This straunge knyght is set to him ful sone
And on the daunce goth With Canace
Here is the reuel and the iolyte
That is nat able a dul man to deuyse
He must have knowe loue and his seruyse
And be a festliche man as fresshe as may
That shal you deuysen suche array
Who coude you telle the fourme of daunses
So vncouthe and so fresshe contenaunces
Suche subtel lokynge and dissymlynges
For drede of ielousye mennys perseyuynges
No man but Launcelot and he is dede
Therfore I passe ouir of al this lustyhede
I say no more but in this iolynesse
I lete them tyl men to soupen them dresse
The steward biddyth spices for to hye
And eke the Wyne in alle this melodye
The vsshers and the squyers been gone
The spyces and the wyne is comen anone
They ete and drynke and When this Was at ende
Vnto the temple as reason Was they Wende
The seruyce done they soupen al by day
What nedith me to reherse theire array
Eche man Wote Wele that a kynges fest
Hath plente to the moost and to the lest
And deyntes mo than be in my knowynge
And after souper goth this noble kyng
To se this horse of brasse With alle the route
Of lordes and of ladies him aboute
Suche Wondrynge Was there of this horse of bras
That sithen the grete sege of troye Was
There as men saWe suche an horse also
Ne Was there suche Wondrynge as Was tho

But fynally the kyng asked the knyght
The vertue of this courser and the myght
And prayed to telle him his gouernaunce
The horse anone gan to trippe and daunce
Whan that this knyght leyde honde on his rayne
And sayde sir there is nomore to sayne
But whan youlyst to ryde any where
ye must trylle a pyn that stont in his ere
Whiche I shalle you telle bitwix vs two
ye must name him to what place also
Or to what countre that ye lyst to ryde
And whan ye come there ye lyst abyde
Byd him discende and trylle another pyn
For therin lyth theffecte of alle the gyn
And he wol doun descende and do youre wyl
And in that place he wol abyde stylle
Though alle the worlde hath the contrary swore
He shal nat thens be drawe ne bore
And or if youlyst bydde him thens gone
Tryl this pyn and he wol vanysshe anone
Oute of the sight of euery maner wight
And come agayn be it by day or nyght
Whan that you cleppyn him agayn
In suche a gyse as I shal to you sayn
Bitwene you and me and that right sone
Ryde whan ye lyst there is nomore to done
Enfourmed whan the kyng was of the knyght
And hath conceyued in his wytte aright
The manere and the fourme of al this thing
Full glad e and blythe was this noble kyng
Repayrynge vnto this reuel as biforn
The brydel is to toure y born
And kept among his Jewelles leef and dere

The horse banysshed I not in what maneze
Oute of theire sight ye yete nomoze of me
But thus I let in lust and in tolyte
This cambuscay his lordes festeynȝ
Tyl nyȝh the day began to sprynge

Explicit prima pars
Et sequitur pars secunda

t The noyce of digestion the sleep
Gan on them wynke and badde them take kepe
That moche inete and laboure wyl haue rest
And with a ȝappynȝ mouth he them al kyst
And sayde it was tyme to lye adoun
For blode was in his domynacionn
Cherisshe blode natures frendes quod he
They thanken him galpynge by two by thre
And euery wight gan drawe him to his rest
As sleep them badde and take it for the best
Theire dremes shal nat be tolde for me
Ful were theire hedes of fumosite
That causith dreme of whiche ther is no chargȝe
They sleppyn tyl it was pryme largȝe
The moost parte but if it were Canace
She was ful mesuraßle as women be
For of her fadre hath she take her leue
To go to rest sone after it was eue
Her lyst nat apalled for to be
Ne on the morowe vnfestliche for to see
And slept her first slepe and awoke
For suche ioye she in her myrroure toke
Bothe of her rynȝ and of her myrroure
That twenty tyme she chaunȝed coloure

And in hir sleep for the impressioun
Of hir myrroure she hadde a visioun
Wherfore or the sonne gan up glyde
She cleppyd hir maystresse hir beside
And sayde that hir lust for to aryse
These olde woman that been gladly wise
As hir maystesse aunswerd hir anone
And sayde madame Whether wol ye gone
Thus arely for folke been alle in reste
I wol quod she aryse for me leste
No lengere slepe but walken aboute
Hir maystresse clepith women a grete route
And up they rysen wele ten or twelue
Up riseth fresshe Canace hir selue
As rody and bright as the yong sonne
That in the ram is foure degrees y ronne
No highir was he whan she redy was
And forth she walkith easely a paas
Arayed after the lusty season sote
Lyghtly for to pley and walken on fote
Nat but with fyue or syxe of hir menye
And in a trenche forth in the parke goth she
The vapoure which fro the erthe glode
Makith the sonne to seme rody and brode
But nevirthelesse it was fayre of sight
That it made alle theire hertes for to light
What for the season and the morwenyng
And for the foules that she herde syng
For right anone she wyst what they ment
Right by theire song and knewe al theire entent
The knotte why that euery tale is tolde
If it be taryed tyl the lust be colde
Of them that haue it herkned after yore

The ſauoure paſſith and euir lengez the moze
ffor ſolſomnes of his prolixite
And by the ſame reaſon thinkith me
I ſholde vnto the knotte condeſcende
And make of hez Walkyng ſone an ende
Amydde a trefozd reyde as White as chalke
As Canace Was pleyng in hez Walke
Thez ſat a faucon ouez hez hede ful hye
That With a pytous voyce ſhe gan to crye
That al the Wode reſowned of hez crye
And beteyn hadde hez ſelue ſo pyton ſly
With both hez Wyngez tyl the rede blode
Ran endlong the tre there as ſhe ſtode
And euir in one ſhe cryed alWey and ſhrygthe
And With her bekke hez ſelue to tWygthe
That ther nas tygre noz ſo cruelle beſt
That dwellith othez in Wode oz in fozeſt
That nolde haue Wepte if he Wepe coude
ffor ſozoWe of hez ſhrychе alWey ſo loude
ffor thez Was neuir yet man on lyue
If that he coude a faucon Wele diſcryue
That herde of ſuche a nothez of feyrneſſe
As Wele of plumage as of gentylneſſe
Of ſhappe and alle that mygth rekned be
A faucon peregryne than ſemed ſhe
Of fremde londe and euirmoze as ſhe ſtode
She ſWouned noWe and noWe foz lacke of blode
Tyl Wele nygh is ſhe falleyn fro the tre
This fayre kynges doughtez Canace
That on hez fyngez bare the queynte ryngе
Through Whiche ſhe vnderſtode Wele euery thing
That any foulе may in his ledeyn ſayn
And coude aunſWere in his ledeyn agayn

Hath vnderstonde what this faucon seyde
And wele nygh for the routhe almoost she deyde
And to the tre she goth ful hastely
And on this faucon loketh ful pytously
And helde her lappe abrode for wele she wyst
The faucon must falle fro the twyst
Whan that it swouned neyt for lacke of blode
Alonge while to wayte there she stode
Tyl at the last she spake in this manere
Vnto the hawke as ye shal after here
What is the cause if it be for to telle
That ye be in this furyal peyne of helle
Quod canace vnto this hauke aboue
Is this sorowe of deth or losse of loue
For as I trowe these been the causes two
That causen moost a gentyl hert wo
Of other harme it recchith nat to speke
For ye youre selue vpon youre self ye wreke
Whiche preuyth wele that other loue or drede
Must be enchesoun of youre cruel dede
Sithen that I se none other wight you chace
For loue of god so do youre self grace
Or what may be youre helpe. for west ne eest
Saw I neuir or nowe vyrde ne best
That faryd with him selue so pytously
ye sle me with youre sorowe verily
I haue of you so grete compassioun
For goddes loue come fro the tre a doun
And as I am a kynges doughter trewe
If that I verily the causes knewe
Of youre disease if it lay in my myght
I wolde amende it or it were nyght
As wys helpe me grete god of kynde

And herbes shalle I right ynough fynde
To hele with youre hurtes hastely
Tho shrygth this faucon yet more pytously
Than ewer she dyd and fyl to grounde anone
And lyth aswone as dede as any stone
Tyl Canace hath in her lappe her take
Vnto tyme she gan oute of her swoune awake
And after that she oute of swouny gan braide
Right in her wo wheslede thus she sayde
That pyte renneth sone in gentyl herte
Feleyng his symylitude in peynes smert
Is proued alday as men may se
As wele by werke as by auctoryte
For gentyl herte kydeth gentylnesse
I se wele that ye haue of my distresse
Compassioun my faire Canace
Of verry womanly benignyte
That nature in youre prynsipales hath set
But for no hope for to fare the bette
But for to obeye to youre hert fre
And for to make other be ware by me
As by the whelpe chastysed is the lyoun
Right for that cause and that conclusioun
While that I haue leyser and space
Myn harme I wyl confesse or I pace
And ewer while that one her sorowe tolde
That other wepte as she to water wolde
Tyl that the faucon badde her be stylle
And with a sigh thus she sayde her wylle
There I was bred alas that hard day
And fostryd in a roche of marble gray
So tenderly that nothing ayleth me
I ne wyst what was aduersyte

Tyl I coude flye ful hyȝh vndre the fkye
Tho duelled a tarcelet me faft by
That femed Wel of alle gentylneſſe
Al Were he ful of treaſon and falſnes
It Was ſo wrapped vndre humble chere
And vndre hue of trouth in ſuche manere
Vndre pleſaunce and vndre beſy peyne
That I ne coude haue Wende he coude fayne
So depe in grene he dyed his coloures
Right as a ſerpent hideth him vndre floures
Tyl he may ſe his tyme for to byte
Right ſo this god of loues ypocryte
Doth ſo his ſerymonyes and his obeyſaunces
And kepith in ſemblaunce of hys obſeruaunces
That ſowneth vnto gentyneſſe of loue
As in a tombe is alle the fyer aboue
And vndre is the corps ſuche as ye Woot
Suche Was this ypocryte bothe colde and hote
And in this Wiſe he ſeruyd his entent
That ſaue the feende none Wyſt What he ment
Tyl he ſo long hadde Wept and compleyned
And many a yere his ſeruyce vnto me feyned
Tyl that my hert to pytous and to nyce
Al innocent of his crowned malice
For ferde of his deth as thought me
Vpon his othes and his ſuretie
Graunted him loue vpon this condicioun
That euirmo myn honoure and my renoun
Were ſauyd bothe pryue and aperte
This is to ſayn that after his deſerte
I yaue him alle my hert and alle my thought
God Wote and he and other Wiſe nought
And toke his herte in chaunge of myn for ay

But ſothe is ſayde gone ſith many a day
A true Wight and a theef thinke nat one
And Whan he ſawe the thyng ſo fer agone
That I hadde graunted him my loue
In ſuche a guyſe as I haue ſayde aboue
And yeue him my true herte as fre
As he ſwore he yaue his herte to me
Anone this tygre full of doubleneſſe
Fyl on his knees With ſo grete humbleneſſe
With high reuerence as by his chere
So lyke a gentyl louer of manere
So rauyſſhed as it ſemed for the ioye
That neuir troylus ne Paris of troye
Jaſon certis ne none othe man
Sithen Lameth Was that al therfirſt began
To louen two as Writen folke bifore
Ne neuir ſithen the firſt man Was bore
Ne coude man by twenty thouſand part
Countrefete the ſophymes of his arte
Ne Worthy to vnbokle his galoche
There doubleneſſe or faynyng ſhold approche
Ne ſo coude thanke a Wight as he dyd me
His maner Was an heuyn for to ſe
To any Woman were ſhe neuir ſo Wiſe
So paynted he his chere at poynte deuyſe
As Wele his Wordes as his contenaunce
And ſo I loued him for his obeyſaunce
And for the trouthe y demed in his hert
That if ſo were that any thing him ſmert
Al were it neuir ſo lyte and I it Wyſt
Me thought I felte deth at my hert twyſt
And ſhortly ſo ferforth this thyng is went
Tyl that my Wyl is his Wyllis inſtrument

This is to sey my wyl obeyed to his wille
In alle thing as fer as reason fyl
Kepyng the boundes of my worshippe euir
Ne neuir hadde I thing so leef ne leuer
As him god wote ne neuir shal nomo
This lastyd lenger than a yere or two
That I supposed of him nothing but gode
But fynally thus at the last it stode
That fortune wolde that he must twynne
Oute of that place whiche I was in
Where me was woo it is no questioun
I can nat make of it discripcioun
For one thyng dar I telle boldly
I knowe what the peyne of dethe is therby
Suche harme I fet that he ne myght beleue
So on a day of me he tok his leue
So sorowfully ete that he wende verily
That he hadde felt as moche sorowe as I
Whan that I herde him spek and sawe his hewe
But neuirtheles I thought he was so trewe
And eke that he repayre sholde agayne
Within a lytel while sothe to sayne
And reason wolde eke that he must go
For his honoure and ofte it fallith so
That I made vertue of necessite
And tok it wele sithen it nedes must be
As I best myght I hyd fro him my sorowe
And tok him by the honde seint John to borowe
And sayde thus lo I am youres alle
Be ye suche as I haue be to you and shal
What he answerd nedith nat to reherse
Who can say bette than he that can do wers
Whan hath he al sayde than hath he done

Therfore bihoueth him to haue a long spone
That shal ete with a feende thus herde I say
So at the last he must forth his wey
And forth fleeth tyl he come where he lyst
Whan it cam him to purpos for to ryst
I trowe he hadde the teyte in mynde
That al thing repayring to his kynde
Gladith it selue thus say men as I gesse
Men loue of propyr kynde newefangleneesse
As byrdes done that men in cages fede
For thogh thou nyght and day take of them hede
And strawe their cage feyre and soft as silke
And peue them sugere hony brede and mylke
yet right anone as that his doze is vp
He with his feet spurneth doune his cuppe
And to the wodde he wol and wormes ete
So newefangyl been they of their mete
And loue noueltees of propyr kynde
No gentylnesse of blode may hem bynde
So ferde this tarcellet allas the day
Though he were gentyl boxn fresshe and gay
And godely for to se humble and free
He sawe vpon a tyme a kyte flee
And sodenly he louyd this kyte so
That al his loue is clene fro me go
And hath his trouthe falsed in this wise
Thus hath the kyte my loue in hir seruyse
And I am lorn without remedye
And with that worde this faucon gan to crye
And swouned oft in Canaces barme
Grete was the sorowe for the haukes harme
That Canace and alle her women made
They nyst hou they myght the faucon glade

But Canace home berith her in her lappe
And softly in plasters gan her wrappe
There as she with her bele hadde hurt her selue
Now can nat Canace but herbes delue
Dute of the grounde and make salues newe
Of herbes fyne and fresshe of hewe
To hele with the hauke fro day to nyght
She doth her besynesse and al her myght
And by her beddes hede she made a mewe
And couered it with beluettes blewe
In signe of trouthe that is in women seen
And al without the mewe is peynted grene
In which were peynted al these false foules
As been these tydiffes tarcelles and oules
Right for despyte were paynted her beside
Pyes on them to crye and to chide
Thus lette I Canace her hauke keppyng
I wol as now no moze speke of her rynq
Tyl it come eft to purpos for to sayn
How that this faucon gat her loue agayne
Repentyng as the storp tellith vs
By mediacioun of Camballus
The kynges sonne of whiche I you tolde
But hens forth I wylle my processe holde
To speken of auentures and batayles
That yet was neuir herde so grete meruayles
First I wyl you telle of Cambuscan
That in his tyme many a cyte wan
And after wol I speke of algarsyf
How that he wan theodora to his wyf
For whom ful ofte in grete peryl he was
Ne had he be holpyn by the horsf bras
And after wol I speke of Camballo

That faught in lystes With brethern two
For Canace or that he myght her wynne
And there I left I wyl agayne begynne

Explicit pars secunda
Et incipit pars tercia

a Apollo Whryllith vp his chare so high
Tyl that god Mercurius house the sligh

Here is nomore of the squyers tale

The Wordes of the Frankeleyne

i N fayth Squyer thou hast the wele y quytte
And gentylly. I pryse wele thy wytte
Quod the Frankeleyne considryng thy youthe
So felyngly thou spekest sir I allouthe
As to my dome there nys none that is here
Of eloquence that shal be thy pere
If that thou lyue god gyue the right gode chaunce
And in vertue sende the contynuaunce
For of thy speche I haue right grete deynte
I haue a sonne and by the trinyte
I hadde lyuer than twenty pounde Worth londe
Though it right nowe were fallen in my honde
He were a man of suche discrecioun
As that ye ben fy or possessioun
But if a man be vertuous Withalle
I haue my sonne snybbed and yet shalle
For he to vertue lysteth nat to attende
But for to play at dyce and dispende
And lese alle that he hath in his vsage

And he hadde leuer talken with a page
Than to comyn wight any gentyl wight
Where he myght lerne gentylnesse aright
Straw we for youre gentylnesse quod tho oure hoost
What frankelyn parde sir wele thou wotest
That eche of you must telle at the lest
A tale or two or breken his biheest
That knowe I wele sir quod the frankleyn
I pray you haue me nat in disdeyne
Though to this man I speke a worde or two
Telle on thy tale withoute wordes mo
Gladly sir hoost quod he I wylle obeye
Unto youre wille. now herken what I say
I wyl you nat contrary in no wise
As fer as that my wytte wyl suffise
I pray to god that it may plesen you
Than wote I wele it is gode ynow

Here begynneth the frankleyns prologue

These olde gentyl brytons in theire daies
Of dyuers auctours maden theire layes
Rymed first in theire owne bryton tong
Suche layes with theire instrumentes they song
Or elles redden them for theire plesaunce
And one of them haue I in remembraunce
Whiche I shal say with a gode wyl as I can
But sires bicause I am a borel man
At my begynnyng first I you beseche
Haue me excused of my rude speche
I lernyd neuer rethorike in certayn
Thynge that I speke must be bare and playne
I slept neuer in the mount of pernaso

Ne lerned Marcus Tulius ne cithero
Colcures knowe I none withouten drede
But ſuche coloures as growen in the mede
Or elles ſuche as men dyen or peynte
Coloures of rethorike be to me queynte
My ſpirite felith in no ſuche matere
But and ye lyſt my tale ſhalle ye here

Here endith the Frankleyns prologue
And here begynneth his tale



i In Armoryk that called is Brytayne
Ther was a knyght that loued and dyd his peyne
To ſerue ladies in his beſt wyſe
And many a laboure and many a grete empryſe
He for his lady wrought or ſhe was wonne
For ſhe was one the fayreſt vndre ſonne
And eke therto comyn of ſo high kynred

That wele vnneth durst the knyght for drede
Tel her his woo his peyne and his distresse
But at the last she for his worthynes
And namely for his meke obeysaunce
Hath suche appetyte caught of his penaunce
That she pryuely fyl of his accorde
To take him for her husbonde and her lorde
Of suche lordship as men haue ouer theire wyues
And for to lede in the more blisse theire lyues
Of his fre wille he swore her as a knyght
That neuer in alle his lyf he day ne nyght
Ne sholde vpon him take no mastrye
Ayenst her wylle ne hyde her ielousye
But her obeye and folowe her wille in alle
As any louer to his lady shal
Saue that the name of soueraynte
That wolde he haue for shame of his degre
She thanketh him of his humblenesse
She sayde sir sithen of youre gentylnesse
ye profer me to haue so large a reyne
Ne wol god neuer bityde vs tweyne
As in myn yrk were other warre or stryf
Sir I wol be youre humble true wyf
Haue here my trouthe tyl that my hert breste
Thus been they bothe in quyete and in reste
For one thyng sires sauely dar I say
That frendes eueriche other must obeye
If they wyl lyue in pease and holde company
Loue wyl nat be constreyned by maystrye
Whan maystrye is come the god of loue anone
Betith his wynges and fare wele he is gone
Loue is a thyng as any thought free
For women of hynde desiren liberte

And nat to be constreyned as a thralle
And so doth men if I the soth telle shal
Loke who is moost pacient in loue
He is at his auauntage al aboue
Pacience is an high vertue certayne
For it venquysseth as clerkes sayn
Thynges that rigoure shal neuer atteyne
For euery worde men may nat chide and pleyne
Lerneth to suffre or elles so mot I gone
ye shal it lerne whether so ye wyl or uone
For in this worlde certeyne no wight is
That he ne doth or sayeth sometyme amys
Ire seknes or constellacioun
Wyne wo or chaungyng of complexioun
Causeth fulle oft to do a mys or speken
On euery wrong a man may nat be wreken
After the tyme must be temperaunce
To euery wight that can of gouernaunce
And therfore hath this wise worthy knyght
To lyuen in ease suffraunce her behight
And she to him ful wisely gan swere
That neuer sholde there be defaute in here
Here men may see in humble wise accorde
Thus hath she take her seruaunt and her lorde
Seruaunt in loue and lorde in mariage
Than was he bothe in lordshippe and in seruage
Seruage nay but in lordshippe aboue
Sithen he hath both his lady and his loue
His lady certis and his wyf also
The whiche that lawe and loue accordeth therto
And whan he was in this prosperyte
Home with his wyf he goth to his countre
Nat fer from penmarke there his dwelling was

Where as he lyueth in blisse and in solas
Who coude telle but he that Weded had be
The ioye the ease and the prosperyte
That is bitwyxte an husbond and his wif
A yere or more lestith this blissful lyf
Tyl that this knyght of whiche I spake thus
That of kayrude Was clepyd Arueragus
Shope him to gone and duelle a yere or twayne
In englonde that clepyd Was eke Britayne
To seke in armes worshippe and honoure
For alle his lust he set in suche laboure
And duelled there two yere the boke sayeth thus
Now wol I stynt of this Arueragus
And speke I wyl of Dorrygene his wyf
That loued her husbond as her hertes lyf
For his absence wepith she and sihth
As done these gode wyues whan them lyketh
She mornyth Wakith waylith and playneth
Desire of his presence so her distrayneth
That alle this wyde worlde she set at nought
Her frendes that knewe her heuy thought
Confortey her in alle that euir they may
They prechen her they teche her nyght and day
That causeles she sleeth her self allas
And euery comfort possible in that caas
They do to her and alle theire besynesse
To auoyde her sorowe and her heuynes
By processe as ye knowen euerichone
Men may so long graue in a stone
Tyl some fygure therin prynted be
So long haue they confortede her that she
Receyued hath by hope and by reason
The enprentynge of her consolacion

Throughe whiche her grete sorowe began to aswage
She may nat alwey dwelle in suche arage
And eke Arueragus in alle this care
Hath sent her lettres home of his welefare
And that he wol come hastely agayne
Or elles hadde this sorowe her hert slayne
Her frendes sawe her sorowes gan for to slake
And prayed her on theire knees for goddes sake
To come and rome her in company
Alwey to dryuen her derke fantesy
And fynally she graunted that requeste
For wele she sawe it was for the beste
Now stode her castelle fast by the see
And ofte with her frendes walkith she
Her to disporte vpon the banke on hye
Where as she may shipes and barges sye
Saylyng theire course where them lyste to go
But yet was that a parcel of her wo
For to her selue ful ofte allas sayde she
Is there no shippe so many as I se
Wolde bringe home my lorde than were myn hert
Alle warysshed of his byttre peynes smert
Another tyme she wolde sytte and thynke
And cast her eyen downward from the brynke
But when she sawe the grysely rockes blake
For berry feer so wolde her hert quake
That on her fete she myght nat sustene
Than wolde she sytte doune vpon the grene
And pitously into the see beholde
And say right thus with soroufulle sighes colde
Eterne god that throughe thy purueaunce
Ledest the worlde by certayne ordenaunce
In dedde as men say ye nothyng make

But lorde this grysly feendly rockes blake
That semen rather vnto soule confusioun
Of werke than any fayre creacioun
Of suche a parfyte wise god and a stable
Why haue ye wrought this werke vnresonable
For by this werke north south west ne est
There nys y fostryd man byrde ne beest
It doth no gode to my wytte but annoyeth
Se ye nat lorde how mankynde it distroyeth
An hundreth thousand bodies of mankynd
Haue rockes slayne al though they be nat in mynde
Sithen mankynde is so faire a part of thy werke
Thou it made first lyke to thyn owne merke
Than semyth it ye haue do a grete charite
Toward mankynde but how may it than be
That ye suche meanys make it to distroyen
Suche meanes ne do no gode but annoyen
I wote wele clerkes wol say as them lyst
By argumentes that alle is for the best
Though I ne can the causes wele know
But that god that made the wynde to blowe
As kepe my lorde this is my conclusioun
To clerkes let I al this disputacioun
But wolde god that alle these rockes blake
Were sonkyn in to helle for his sake
These rockes sle my herte for fere
Thus wolde she say with many a pytous tere
Her frendes saw that it was no disporte
To roumyn by the see but discomforte
And shapen for to pley somwhere elles
But leden her by ryuers and by welles
And eke in other places delectables
They daunse and pley at the chesse and at the tables

So on a day right on the morowe tyde
Vnto a gardeyn that was there beside
In whiche that they hadde made theire ordenaunce
Of vitayle and of other purueaunce
They gone and pley them al the long day
And this was in the sixte morowe of may
Whiche may hath peynted with her soft shoures
This gardeyn fulle of leuys and of floures
And craft of mannys honde so curiously
Arayde hath this gardyne truly
That neuir was there gardyn of suche pryce
But if it were the verry paradise
The odoure of floures and the fresshe sight
Wolde haue made any hert lighte
That euir was borne but if to grete seknesse
Or to grete sorowe helde it in distresse
So fulle it was of beaute with plesaunce
Anone after dyner gan they to daunce
And song also saue dorrigene allone
Whiche made alwey her compleynte and her mone
For she ne salve him in the daunce go
That was her husbonde and her loue also
But neuirtheles she must her tyme abyde
And with gode hope lete her sorowes slyde
Vpon this daunce amonge other men
Daunced a squyer bifore Dorrigene
That fresshir was and iolyer of arraye
As to my dome than is the moneth of May
He syngith daunsith passing any other man
That is or was sithen the worlde began
Therwith he was if men shulde him discryue
One of the best fayrynge men on lyue
Yonge stronge vertuous riche and wise

And wele beloued and holden in grete pryce
And shortly if I the soth tel shalle
Vnwyttyng of this Dorygene at alle
This lusty squyer seruaunt to venus
Whiche that cleppyd was aurelius
Hath loued her best of any creature
Two yere and more as was his anenture
But neuir durst he telle her his greuaunce
Withoute the cuppe dranke he alle his penaunce
He was despeyred nothing durst he say
Saue in his songes somdele wolde he wrey
His wo as in a generalcompleynynge
He sayde he loued and was beloued nothing
Of suche matir made he many layes
Songes compleyntes roundels virelayes
How that he durst nat his sorowe tel
But langwynge as a fury doth in helle
And dye he sayde he must as dyd Echo
For Narcisus that durst nat telle his woo
In other maner than ye here now say
Ne durst he nat his wo to her bewray
Saue parauenture at festes and at daunses
There yonge folke kepyn their obseruaunses
It may wele been he loked in her face
In suche a wise as men that a shen grace
But nothing wyst she of his entent
Neuirthelesse it happed or they thens went
Bicause that he was her nyghboure
And was a man of worshippe and honoure
And hadde knowen him of tymes yore
They fallen in speche and so more and more
In to his purpos drewe Aurilius
And whan he sawe his tyme he sayde thus

Madame quod he by god that this worlde made
So that I wyst I myght youre herte gladde
I wolde that day that youre Arueragus
Went ouer the see. that I Aurelius
Hadde gone there I sholde neuir come agayne
For wele I wote my seruyce is in vayne
My guerdon is but brestyng of myn hert
Madame reweon my peynes smert
For with one worde ye may me sleen or saue
Here at youre feet wolde god I were begraue
I ne haue as now nomore leyser to say
Haue mercy swete and do me nat to dye
She gan to loke vpon this aurelius
Is this youre wyl quod she and say ye thus
Neuir erst quod she ne wyst I what ye ment
But nowe Aurelye I knowe youre entent
By that god that yaue me soule and lyf
Ne shal I neuir be vntrewe wyf
In worde ne in werkes as fer as I haue wyt
I wyl be his to whome that I am knytte
Take this for fynalle aunswere as for me
But after than in pley thus sayde she
Aurely sayde she by high god above
yet wol I graunt you to be youre loue
Sithen I se you so pytously complayne
Loke what day that endlong brytayne
ye remeue alle the rockes stone by stone
That they ne lette bote ne shippe to gone
I say whan ye haue made the coost so clene
Of rockes that there is no stone y seen
Than wol I loue you best of any man
Haue here my trouthe in alle that euir I can
Is ther none other grace in youre honde quod he

No by that lorde quod she that maked me
For wele I wote that it shalle neuir betyde
Let suche foly oute of youre hert a slyde
What deynte sholde a man haue in his lyf
For to loue another mannys wyf
That hath her body whan so that him lyketh
Aureolus ful ofte sore siketh
Wo was Aurely whan that he this herd
And with a sorouful hert he thus answerd
Madame quod he this were impossible
Than must I dye in sodeyn deth horrible
And with that worde he turned him anone
Tho cam her frendes many one
And in the aleyes roumed vp and doun
And nothing wiste of this conclusioun
And sodenly begonnen reuel newe
Tyl the bright sonne loste his hewe
For the orisont had reft the sonne his light
This is a smoche to say as it was nyght
And home they gone in ioye and in solas
Saue only wrecched Aureolus allas
He to his house is gone with sorouful hert
He sayeth that he ne may from his deth astert
Him semeth that he felith his hert colde
Vnto heuyn his hondes he gan holde
And on his knees bare he set him doun
And in rauyng sayde this orisoun
For verry woo oute of his wytte he brayde
He nyst what he spake but thus he sayde
With pitous hert his pleynt hath begonne
Vnto the goddes and first vnto the sonne
He sayde apollo god and gouernoure
Of euery plante herbe tre and floure

That yeuest after thy declynacion
To eche of them his tyme and his season
And thyn herborowe chaungith lowe and hye
Lorde phebus cast thy mercyable eye
On wrethed Aurely whiche am but lorn
Lo lorde my lady hath my deth ſworn
Withouten gylte but thy benygnyte
Upon my dedely herte haue ſome pyte
But wele I wote lorde phebus if ye lyſt
ye may me helpe ſaue my lady beſt
Now bouche ſauf that I may you deuyſe
How that I may be holpen and in what wiſe
youre bliſful ſuſtyr Lucina the ſhene
That of the ſee chief goddeſſe is and quene
Though neptunus haue deyte in the ſee
yet Empreſſe aboue him is ſhe
ye knowe wele lorde right as her deſire
Is to be quyckned and lyghned of youre fyre
For whiche ſhe folowith you ful beſyly
Right ſo the ſee deſireth naturally
To folowe her and ſhe that is goddeſſe
Bothe in the ſee and ryuers more and leſſe
Wherfore lorde phebus this is my requeeſt
Do this myracle or do myn herte breſt
That nowe next at this oppoſicioun
Within whiche ſigne ſhalle be the lyoun
As prayeth her ſo grete a flode to brynge
That fyue fadom at the leeſt it ouer ſprynge
The hyeſt roche in Armorike britayne
And let this flode endure yeres twayne
Than certis to my lady may I ſay
Holdith youre heeſt the roches be a way
Lorde phebus this myracle do for me

Pray hez that she go no fastez cours than ye
I say thus praye youre sustre that she go
No fastez courses than ye in yeres two
Than shal she be at euyn ful al wey
And sprynge flode last both nyght and day
And but ye bouchshauf in suche manere
To graunt me my souerayne lady dere
Pray hez to synke euery roche a doun
Into helle theire owne derke mansioun
Vndre the grounde thez pluto duellith in
Or neuir mo shal I my lady wynne
The temple in delphos wol I barfote seke
Lord phebus se the teres on my cheke
And of my payne haue some compassioun
And with that worde in swoune he fyl a doun
And long tyme he lay forth in a traunce
His brothez whiche that tyme we his penauce
Vp caught him and to bedde hath him brought
Despeyred in this turment and in his thought
Lete I this wofut creature lye
Chese he whethez he wollyue or dye
Arueragus with hele and honoure
As he that was of cheualry the floure
Is comyn home and othez worthy men
A blisful arte thou nowe Dorrigen
That hast thy blisful husbond in thyn armes
The fresshe knyght the worthy man of armes
That loueth the as his herteslyf
No thing ne lyst he to be ymagynatyf
If any wight hadde spoke whiles he was oute
To hez of loue therof hadde he no doute
He nat entendith to no suche matere
But daunsith iustith and makith gode chere

And thus in ioye and blisse I let them duelle
And of the seke Aurelius wol I telle
In langure and in turment furious
Two yere and more ley this Aurelius
Of any foote he myght on erthe gone
Ne comforte in this tyme hadde he none
Saue of his brother whiche was a clerke
He knew alle this wo and alle this werke
For to none other creature certayne
Of this matere he durst no worde seyne
Vndre his breest he bare it more secre
Than euer dyd pamphilus for galathe
His breest was hole without for to seen
But in his hert ay was the arowe kene
As wele ye knowe of a fursanure
In surgery ful perlous is the cure
But men myght touche the arowe or come therby
His brother wepith and wayleth pryuely
Til at the last him fyl in remembraunce
That whiles he was at Orliaunce in fraunce
As yong clerkes that been lyherous
To rede artes that been curyous
Seken in euery halke and euery herne
Particuler sciences for to lerne
He him remembred that vpon a day
In Orlyaunce in his studye a boke he say
Of magyke naturalle whiche his felawe
That was that tyme a bacheler of lawe
Had pryuely vpon his deske laft
Al were he there to lern a nother craft
Whiche boke spake moche of operaciouns
Touchyng the eyght and twenty mansiouns
That longen to the mone and suche foly

Pray her that she go no faster cours than ye
I say thus praye youre sustre that she go
No faster course than ye in yeres two
Than shal she be at euyn ful al wey
And sprynge flode last both nyght and day
And but ye bouchshauf in suche manere
To graunt me my souerayne lady dere
Pray her to synke euery roche a doun
Into helle theire owne derke mansioun
Vndre the grounde there pluto dwelleth in
Or neuir mo shal I my lady wynne
The temple in delphos wol I barfote seke
Lord phebus se the teres on my cheke
And of my payne haue some compassioun
And with that worde in swoune he fyl a doun
And long tyme he lay forth in a traunce
His brother whiche that knewe his penaunce
Vp caught him and to bedde hath him brought
Despeyred in this turment and in his thought
Lete I this wofful creature lye
Chese he whether he wolde lyue or dye
Arueragus with hele and honoure
As he that was of cheualry the floure
Is comyn home and other worthy men
O blisful arte thou nowe Dorigen
That hast thy blisful husbond in thyn armes
The fresshe knyght the worthy man of armes
That loueth the as his herteslyf
Nothing ne lyst he to be ymagynatyf
If any wight hadde spoke whiles he was oute
To her of loue therof hadde he no doute
He nat entendith to no suche matere
But daunsith iustith and maketh good chere

And thus in ioye and blisse I let them duelle
And of the seke Aurelius wol I telle
In langure and in turment furious
Two yere and more ley this Aurelius
Or any foote he myght on erthe gone
Ne comforte in this tyme hadde he none
Saue of his brother whiche was a clerke
He knewe alle this wo and alle this werke
For to none other creature certayne
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Vndre his breest he bare it more secre
Than euir dyd pamphilus for galathe
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But in his hert ay was the arowe kene
As wele ye knowe of a sursanure
In surgery ful perlous is the cure
But men myght touche the arowe or come therby
His brother wepith and waileth pryuely
Til at the last him fyl in remembraunce
That whiles he was at Orliaunce in fraunce
As yong clerkes that been lyherous
To rede artes that been curyous
Seken in euery halke and euery herne
Particuler sciences for to lerne
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That was that tyme a bacheler of lawe
Had pryuely vpon his deske laft
Al were he there to lern a nother craft
Whiche boke spake moche of operacioums
Touchyng the eyght and twenty mansiouns
That longen to the mone and suche foly

As in oure daies is nat worth a flye
For holy chirche sayeth in oure beleue
Ne suffreth nat illusioun vs to greue
And whan this boke was in remembraunce
Anone for ioye his hert gan to daunce
And to him selue he sayde pryuely
My brother warisshed shal be hastely
For I am syker that ther be sciences
By whiche men make diuerse apparences
Suche as these subtel tregetours pley
For ofte at festes haue I herde sey
That tregetours within an halle large
Haue made come in a water and a barge
And in the halle rowen vp and doun
Some tyme hath semed come a grete lyoun
And some tyme floures sprynge in a mede
Some tyme a vyne and grapes white and rede
Some tyme a castel of lyme and stone
And whan he lyketh it vanysheth anone
Thus semeth it to many a mannys sight
Now than conclude I thus if I myght
At Orliaunce some olde fela we fynde
That hadde the monys mansiouns in mynde
Or other magyke natural aboue
He sholde wele make my brother haue his loue
For with an apparence a clerke may make
To mannys sight that alle the roches blak
Of brytayne were vanysshed euerichone
And shippes by the brynkes comyn and gone
And in suche fourme endure a woke or two
Than were my brother warisshed of his wo
Than muste she nedes holde her behest
Or elles he shal shame her at the lest

What ſholde I make a lengere tale of this
Vnto his brothers bedde y come he is
And ſuche comforte he yaue him forto gooy
To Orliaunce that he vp ſtert anooy
And oy his wey thay on warde is he fare
In hope for to be lyſſed of his care
Whay they were come almooſt to that cyte
But if it were a two furlong or thre
A yong clerke romyng by him ſelue they mette
Whiche that in latyn thriftely them grette
And after that he ſayde a wondre thing
I knowe quod he the cauſe of youre comyng
And or they further any fote went
He tolde them alle what was theire entent
This Brytouy clerke him aſked of fiawes
The whiche he hadde knowey in olde daies
And he aunſwerde him that they dede were
For whiche he wept ful many a tere
Douy of his horſe Aurelius light anone
And with this magicien forth he gay gone
Home to his houſe and made them wele at eaſe
Them lacked no vytayle that them myght pleaſe
So wele arayed houſe as there was one
Aurelius in his lyf ſawe neuir none
He ſhewde them or he went to ſouppey
Foreſtes parkes ful of wylde dere
There ſawe he hertes with theire hornes hye
The greteſt that were euir ſeye with eye
He ſawe of them an hundreth ſlayne with hounde
And ſome of arowes blede and bytter wounde
He ſawe whay boyded were theſe wylde dere
The fawconers vpon a fayre ryuer
That with theire haukes haue the herons ſlayne

Tho sawe he knyghtes iustyng in a pleyne
And after this he dyd him suche plesaunce
That he him shewyd his lady in a daunce
In whiche him selue dauuced as him thought
And whan this maister that this magyke wrought
Sawe it was tyme he clapped his hondes to
And sare wele al oure reuel was y do
And yet remeued they neuir oute of the house
While they sawe al this sight meruaylous
But in his stody there his bokes be
They sytten stylle and no wight but they thre
To him this mayster called his squyer
And sayde him thus is redy oure souper
Almoost an houre it is I vndertake
Syn I you badde oure soupere for to make
Whan that these worthy men went with me
Into my stodye there my bokes be
Sir quod the squyer whan it lyketh you
It is al redy though ye wol right nowe
Go we than soupe quod he it is for the best
These amorous folke somtyme must haue rest
And after souper fyl they in tretye
What sūme sholde the maysters guerdon be
To remeue alle the rockes in brytayne
And eke from geronde to the-mouthe of sayne
He made him straunge he swore so god him saue
Lesse than a thousand pounde he wolde nat haue
Ne gladly for that sūme he wold nat gone
Aurelius with blissful hert anone
Sayth thus fy on a thousand pounde
The wyde worlde which men say is rounde
I wolde it yeue if I were lorde of it
This bargayne is full dryue and full knytte

ye ſhal be payd truly by my trouthe
But lokith now for none negligence ne ſlouth
ye tary vs here no lengere than to morowe
Nay quod the clerke haue here my fayth to borowe
To bed he goth Aurelius whan him leſt
And wele nygh alle that nyght he hadde reſt
What for his laboure and for his hope of bliſſe
His woful herte of penaunce hadde a lyſſe
Vpon the morowe whan it was day
To brytayne tokē they the right wey
Aurelius and this magicien him beſide
And be deſcended there they wol abyde
And this was as the boke doth remembre
The colde froſty ſeaſon of December
Phebus wexed olde and hewed lyke latoun
That afore in his hote declynacioun
Shone as the burned golde with ſtremes bryght
But now in capricorne adoun he light
Where as he ſhone ful pale I dar wele ſeyn
The byttre frostes with the ſlyte and rayne
Diſtroyed hath the grene in euery yerde
Janus ſytteth by the fyre with double berde
And drynkith of his bugle horne the wyne
Biforn him ſtandith the braun of the tuſked ſwyne
And nowel cryeth euery luſty man
Aurelius in alle that euery he can
Doth to his mayſtre chere and reuerence
And prayeth him to done his diligence
To bring him oute of his peynes ſmert
Or with a ſwerde that he wolde ſlyte his hert
This ſubtel clerke ſuche routhe had of this man
That nyght and day his ſpedde him that he can
To wayte a tyme of this concluſioun

This is to say to make illusioun
By suche an apparaunt iogelrye
I can no termes of Astrologye
That she and euery wight sholde wene and say
That of Brytayne the roches were awey
Or elles they were sonkyn vndre the grounde
So at the last he hath his tyme y founde
To make his iape and his wrechidnesse
Of suche a superstitious cursidnesse
His tables tolentanes forth he brought
Ful wele correctid it lacked nought
Neyther his colet ne his expans yeres
Ne his rotis ne his other geres
As ben his centris and his argumentes
And his proporcional conuenientes
For his equacions in euery thyng
And by his eyght spere in his worhyng
He knewe ful wele how fer alnath was shoue
Fro the hede of that fixe aries aboue
That in the nynthe spere considred is
Ful subtelly he had calked al this
Whan he hadde founde his first mansioun
He knewe the remenaunt by proporcioun
And knewe the ryssyng of his mone wele
And in whose face and terme and euerydele
And knewe wel the monys mansioun
Attendaunt vnto his operacioun
And knewe also wele his other obseruaunces
For suche illusiouns and suche myschances
As hethen folke vseden in tho dayes
For which no lengere makith he delayes
But throughe his magyke for a woke or twey
It semed that alle the roches were a wey

Aurelius yet Whiche that dispeyred is
Whether he shalle haue his loue or fare a mys
And wayteth nyght and day on this myracle
And whan he kne we ther was none obstakle
That boyded were the rothes echone
Doun to his maisters feet he ysklanon
And sayde J Wofull Wrechyd Aurelius
Thanke you lord aud my lady Venus
That me haue holped fro my caris colde
And to the temple his Wey hath he holde
Where as he kne We he sholde his lady se
And whan he saWe his tyme anone right he
With dredful hert and With humble chere
Salued hath his souerayne lady dere
My right Worthy lady quod this Wofull man
Whom J mooste drede and loue as J best can
And lotheste were in alle this Worlde displease
Nere it that for you J haue suche disease
That J must dye here at youre fote anon
Nat Wol J tel you J am Wo begon
But certis other J must dye or playne
ye sle me gyltles for Verry peyne
But of my deth though ye haue no routhe
Auyseth you or that ye Breke youre trouthe
And repente you for that god aboue
Or ye me sle bicause that J you loue
For madame ye Wote What ye haue highte
Nat that J chalange any thing of right
Of you my souerayne lady but of youre grace
But in the gardyn ponder in suche a place
ye Wote right Wele What ye behight me
And in my honde there youre trouthe plight ye
To loue me best god Wote ye sayde so

Al be it that I vnworthy be therto
Madame I speke it for the honoure of you
More than for to saue my hertes lyf right nowe
I haue do so as ye comaunded me
And if ye vouche sauf ye may to se
Doth as you lyst haue youre heest in mynde
For right or wrong right there shal ye me fynde
In you lyth alle to do me lyue or deye
But wele I wote the rockes been away
He taketh his leue and she astonyed stode
In al her face nas there one drope of blode
She wende neuir to come in suche a trappe
Allas quod she that euir this sholde happe
For wende I neuir by possibylite
That suche a monstre or meruayle myght be
It is ayenst the processe of nature
And home she goth a sorowful creature
For verry fere vnnethes myght she go
She wepith and waylith a day or two
And swouneth that it routh was to se
But why it was vnto noman tolde she
For out of toun was gone Arueragus
But to her selue she spake and sayde thus
With pale face and sorowfulle chere
In her compleynte as ye shalle after here
Allas quod she on the fortune I playne
That vnware wrapped hast me in this cheyne
Fro whiche to scape wote I no socoure
Saue only deth or grete dishonoure
One of these two behoueth me to chese
But neuirtheles yet hadde I lyuer lese
My lyf than of my body haue a shame
Or knowe my selue fals or lese my name

And with my deth I may be quytte y wys
Hath ther nat many a noble wyf or this
And many a mayde ſleyn her ſelue alias
Rather than with their body done a treſpaas
Ye certis theſe ſtories berith witneſſe
Whan threty tyrauntes ful of curſydneſſe
Had ſleyn ſidon in Athenes at the feſt
They comaunded his doughters for to areſt
And brynge bifore them in deſpyte
Al naked to fulfille their foule delite
And in their faders blode they made them dauuce
Upon the pauement god geue them myſchaunce
For whiche the wofulle maydens ful of drede
Rather then they wolde leſe their madynhede
They been prevely ſtert into a welle
And dreut them ſelue as the bokes tel
They of Mecene leten enquere and ſeke
Of Lacedomy fyfty maydens eke
On whiche they wold haue doon their lichery
But was ther noon of al that company
That ſhe nas ſlayn and with a glade entent
Chees rather for to dye than for to aſſent
To be oppreſſed of her maydenhede
Why ſhode I than to dye be in drede
Lo eke the tyrauut Ariſtoclides
That louyd a mayde hight ſtymphalides
Whan her fadre ſlayne was on a nyght
Unto Dyanes temple goth ſhe right
And hent the ymage in her hondes two
From whiche ymage wolde ſhe neuir go
No wight the hondes of her myght arace
Tyl ſhe was ſleyne right in the place
Now ſithen that maydens hadde ſuche deſpyte

To been defouled with mannys delyte
Wele ought a wyf rather hir selue to sle
Than be defouled as it thynkith me
What shal I say of Hasdribaldis wif
That at Cartage beraft hir selue hir lyf
Whan that she sawe the Romaynes wan the toun
Be tohe hir children alle and shipped a doun
Into the fyre and chose rather to dye
Than that any Romayne dyd her belonye
Hath nat Lucrece slayne hir self allas
At Rome for that she oppressed was
Of tarquyne for hir thought it was a shame
To lyue whan she hadde loste hir name
The seuyn maydens of Mellesye also
Haue slayne them selue for verry drede and wo
Rather than the folke of galle sholde them oppresse
Mo than a thousand storyes as I gesse
Coude I telle as touchyng this matere
Whan Abradate was sleyne .his wif so dere
Hir selue slough and lete hir blode to glyde
In Abradates woundes depe and wyde
And sayde my body at the lest wey
Ther shalle no wight defoule if I may
What shal I of them moo ensamples sayne
Sithen that so many haue them selue slayne
Wele rather than they wold defouled be
I wol conclude that it is the best for me
To sle my self than be defouled thus
I wol be true vnto Arueragus
Or elles sle my selue in some manere
Right as dyd Democrenes doughter dere
Bicause she ne wolde defouled be
O Cedasus it is ful grete pyte

To rede hou thy doughter dyed allas
That slough her selue in suche a maner caas
As grete pyte it Was or Wele more
The thebay mayden that for Nichamore
Her self slough right for suche manere wo
And another thebay mayden dyd right so
For one of macedone had her ouir pressed
She With her deth her maydenhede redressed
What shal I say of Niceratis Wyf
That for suche a caas beraft her selue her lyf
How true ehe Was also Alcebeades
That for his lone to dye rather chees
Than for to suffre his body vnburied to be
Lo Whiche a Wyf Was Alceste also quod she
What sayeth Omere of gode Penolope
Al grece knoWith of her chastite
Parde of Lacedomea is Writen thus
That Whan at troye Was slepy protholaus
Nolengere Wolde she lyue after his day
The same of noble porcya tel I may
Without Brutus coude she nenir lyue
To Whome she hadde her hert alle yiue
The parfyte Wifhode of Arthemesye
Honoured is through oute alle Barbarye
O tenta quene thy Wifly chastite
To alle Wynes may a myrrour be
The same thing I say of Belyea
Of Rodogone and ehe Valerya
Thus pleyneth Orrigene a day or tWey
Purposyng euir that she Wolde dye
But neuirthelesse vpon the thrydde nyght
Home cometh Arueragus the Worthy knyght
And asketh her Why that she Wepith so sore

And ſhe gan wepe euir lenger the more
Alias quod ſhe the tyme that I was born
Thus haue I ſayde quod ſhe thus haue I ſworn
And tolde him alle the caas by and by
How ſhe hadde promyſed ignorantly
The ſquyer as ye haue herde to fore
It nedith nat to reherce it any more
This huſbonde with glade chere in frendly wiſe
Anſwerde and ſayde as I ſhalle deuyſe
Is there aught elles Dorrigene but this
Nay nay ſhe ſayde god helpe me ſo as wys
This is to mehyl and it were goddes wyl
ye wif quod he lat ſleppyn that is ſtylle
It may be wele yet perauenture to day
ye ſhalle youre trouthe holde by my fay
For god ſo wyſly haue mercy on me
I hadde wele lyuer ſtyched for to be
For verry loue whiche I to you haue
But ye ſholde youre trouthe kepe and ſaue
Trouthe is the higheſt thing that man may kepe
But with that worde he braſt anon to wepe
And ſayde I you forbede on peyne of deth
That neuir while you laſtith lyf or breth
To no wight te telle of this my ſauenture
As I may beſt I wol my wo endure
Ne make no contenaunce of heuyneſſe
That folke of you may deme harme or geſſe
And forth he clepith a squyer and a mayde
Go forth anone with Dorrigene he ſayde
And bring hir to ſuche a place anon
They toke theire leue and on theire wey they gon
But they ne wyſt why ſhe thidre went
He wolde no wight telle his entent

Parauenture an hepe of you ywys
Wyl holden him a lewde man in this
That he wol put his wif in ieopardy
Herkneth the tale or ye on him crye
She may haue bettre fortune than you semeth
And whan that ye haue herde the tale, demeth
This squyer whiche that hight Aurelius
On Dorigene that was so amerous
Of auenture happed her to mete
Amydde the toun right in the quytheſt ſtrete
As ſhe wolde gone the wey forth right
Toward the gardeyne there as ſhe hadde hight
And he was to the gardyn warde alſo
For wele he ſpyed whan ſhe wolde go
Oute of her houſe to any maner place
But thus they meten by auenture and grace
And he ſalueth her with glade entent
And aſked of her whither warde ſhe went
And ſhe anſwerd half as ſhe wee madde
Vnto the the gardyn as my huſbonde badde
My trouthe for to holde allas allas
Aurelius gan to wondre in this caas
And in his hert hadde grete compaſſioun
Of her chere and of her lamentacioun
And of Arueragus the worthy knyght
That badde her holde that ſhe hadde hight
So lothe him was if ſhe ſholde breke her trouthe
And in his herte he caught of this grete routhe
Conſiderynge the beſt on euery ſyde
That from that lnſt yet were him lyuer abyde
Than to do ſo high a folyſſhe wrechydneſſe
Ayenſt fraunchiſe and gentylneſſe
For whiche in fewe wordes ſayde he thus

Madame say to youre lorde Arueragus
That sithen I se his grete gentylnesse
To you and eke I se youre grete distresse
That him were lyuer haue shame & that were routhe
Than ye to me thus sholde breke youre trouth
I haue wele lyuer euir to suffre woo
Than I departe the loue bitwix you two
I you releesse madame into youre honde
Quyte euery surement and euery bonde
That ye haue made to me as here biforn
Sithen that tyme that ye were first born
My trouthe I plight I shal you neuir repreef
Of none beheest and here I take my leue
As of the trewest and eke the best wyf
That euir yet I knewe in alle my lyf
But euery wif be ware of her beheest
On Dorrigene remembrith at the leest
Thus can a squyer do a gentyl dede
As wele as can a knyght withouten drede
She thankith him upon her knees al bare
And home to her husbonde is she fare
And tolde him al as ye haue herde me sayde
And be ye syker he was wele apayed
That it were impossible me to write
What sholde I lengere of this caas endyte
Arueragus and Dorrigene his wif
In souerayne blisse ledyn forth theire lyf
Neuir after was there angre them bitwene
He cherisshed her as though she were a quene
And she was trewe to him for euirmore
Of these two folke ye get of me nomore
Aurelius that his cost hath al forlorn
Cursith the tyme that euir he was born

Allas allas quod he that I behight
Of pured golde a thousand pounde wyght
Vnto this Philosopher how shal I do
I se nomore but that I am fordo
Myn heritage I must nedes selle
And be a begar here I may nat duelle
And shamyn alle my kynrede in this place
But I of him may gete som grace
But nathelesse I wol of him assay
At certayne yeres and daies to pay
And thanke him of his grete curtesye
My trouthe wyl I kepe I wol nat lye
With hert sore he goth vnto his cofre
And brought golde vnto this philosophre
The value of fyue hundred pounde I gesse
And him beseched of his gentylnesse
To graunte him daies of the remenaunt
And sayde maister I dar wele make auaunt
I fayled neuir of my trouth as yet
For sekirly my dette shal wele be quyt
Toward you how euir that I fare
To go a begyng in my kyrtel bare
But if ye wolde wouchesauf on suretye
Two yere or thre for to respyte me
Than were I wele for elles must I selle
Myn heritage ther is no more to telle
This philosophre sobrely aunswerde
And sayde thus whan he his wordes herde
Haue I nat holde couenaunt vnto the
yes certis wele and truly quod he
Hast thou nat had thy lady as the lyketh
No no quod he and sorowfully he sikyth
What was the cause telle me if thou can

Aurelius anone his tale began
And tolde him al as ye haue herde biforе
It nedith nat to reherce it you more
He sayde Arueragus of gentylnes
Hadde leuer to dye in sorowe and in distres
Than that his wyf were of her trouthe fals
The sorowe of Dorrigene he tolde him als
How loth her were to be a wycked wyf
And that she hadde leuer haue lost her lyf
And her trouthe she swore through innocence
She neuer erst herde spehe of apparence
That made me to haue in her so grete pyte
And right as frely as he sent her to me
As frely sent I her home to him agayn
This is al and some there is no more to sayne
This philosopher aun swerde leue brother
Euerich of you dyd gentylnesse to other
Thou art a squyer and he is a knyght
But god forbede for his blissful myght
But a clerke coude do as gentyl a dede
As wele as any of you it is no drede
Sir I relesse the thy thousand pounde
As nowe thou were cropen oute of the grounde
Ne neuer or nowe ne haddest knowen me
For sir I wol nat take a peny of the
For alle my craft ne for my trauayle
Thou hast wele payde for my bytayle
It is ynough fare wele and haue gode day
And toke his horse and forth he goth his wey
Lordynges this question than a sked I you
Whiche was the moost frc as thynkith you
Now tellith me or that ye further wende
I can no more my tale is at an ende

Here endith the ſfraunkleyns tale
And folowith the prologe of the wyf of Bathe



e yperience though none auctorite
were in this worlde is right ynough for me
To ſpeke of wo that is in mariage
But lordes ſithen I twelue yere was of age
Thanked be god that is eternalle on lyue
Huſbondes at the chirche dore haue I had fyue
If I ſo ofte myght haue wedded be
And al were worthy men in theire degre
But me was tolde nat long a go y wys
That ſithen crist went nat but onys
To weddyng in the Cane of galile
That by the ſame enſample taught he me
That I ne wedded ſhulde be but onys
Lo be whiche a ſharpe worde for the nones
Beſide a welle Jeſus god and man

Spake in repreef of the ſamaritan
Thou haſt had fyue huſbondes ſayd he
And that ilke man that now hath the
Is nat thy huſbonde thus he ſayde certayne
What he ment therby I can nat ſayn
But that I aſke why the fyfte man
Was nat huſbonde to the ſamaritan
How many myght he haue in mariage
yet herde I neuer tellen in myn age
Of this nombre were dyffinicioun
Men may deme and glóſe vp and doun
But wele I wote expreſſe without en lye
That god bad vs wey and multiplye
That gentyl texte can I wele vnderſtond
Eke wele I wote he ſayde that myn huſbonde
Shold leue fader and modre and take to me
But of nombre no mencion made he
Of bygamye or of octogamye
Why ſholde men ſpeke of it vnlonye
Lo here the wyſe kyng dan Salamon
I trowe he had wyues mo than one
As wolde to god it leful were to me
To haue refreſſhyng half ſo oft as he
Which a yeft of god had he for al his wyues
No man hath ſuche that in this worlde on lyue is
God wote this noble kyng as to my wytte
The firſt nyght had many a mery fytte
With eche of them ſo wele was him on lyue
ye bleſſyd be god that I haue hadde fyue
Of whiche I haue pycked oute the beſt
Bothe of their neyther purſe and eke their cheſt
Dyuerſe ſcoles maketh parfyte clerkes
And dyuerſe practyke in many ſondry werkes

Wahith the werh may parfyte ſikerly
Of fyue huſbondes ſcolyng am I
Welcome the ſixte whan that euir he ſhal
Forſoth I wyl nat kepe me chaſt in al
Whan my huſbonde is fro the worlde y gone
Some criſten may ſhal wedde me anone
For the appoſtole ſayth that I am fre
To wedde a goddes half where it lyketh me
He ſayth to be wedded it is no ſynne
Better it is to be wedded than to brenne
What recheth me though men ſay velony
Of ſhrewde Lameth and of his bygamye
I wote Abraham was a ful holy man
And ehe Jacob as fer as euir I here can
And eche of them hadde mo wyues than two
And many a nother holy man alſo
Where can ye ſay in any maner age
That euir god defended mariage
By expreſſe wordes I pray you telle me
Or where comaunded he euir virgynite
I woot as wele as ye it is no drede
The appoſtel whan he ſpake of madynhede
He ſayde that therof precept hadde he none
Men may counſeyle a woman to be one
But counſeyl is no maner comaundment
He puttith that in oure owne iugement
For hadde god comaunded madynhede
Than had he dampned weddyng oute of drede
And certis if there nere no ſede y ſowe
Virginyte what ſholde therof growe
Paule durſt nat comaunde at the leſte
A thing whiche his mayſter yaue none heſte
The darte is ſet vpon virginyte

Cache who so may who rennyth best let se
But this worde is nat take of euery wight
But there as god wol yeue it of his myght
I wote wele the apostel was a mayde
But natheles thoughe he wrote and sayde
He wolde euery wight were suche as he
Al is but counseyl to virgynite
And for to be a wyf he yaue me leue
Of indulgence so it be nat to repreue
To wedde me if that my make dye
Withoute excepcioun of bygamye
Al were it gode no woman for to touche
He ment in his bedde or in his couche
For peryl it is fyre and towe to assemble
ye knowe what this ensample may resemble
This is al and some he helde virgynite
More parfyte than weddynge in freelte
Freelte clepe I but if that he or she
Wolde lede yn al their lyf in chastite
I graunt it wele I haue none enuye
Though maydenhede preferre bygamye
It lyketh them to be clene in body and gooste
Of myn estate I wyl make no booste
Ful wele I knowe a lorde in his householde
Hath nat euery vessel of siluer and of golde
Some been of tre and done their lorde seruise
God clepith to him folke in sondry wyse
And eche hath of god a propre yeft
Som this som that as him lyst to shyft
Virgynite is a grete perfectioun
And contynence eke with deuocioun
But crist that is of perfectioun the welle
Bad nat euery wight he sholde go selle

Alle that he hath and yeue it to the poure
And in ſuche Wyſe folowe him and his foote
He ſpake to him that Wyl lyue parfytly
And lordynges by youre leue that am nat I
I wol beſtowe the floure of alle myn age
In the actes and in the frute of mariage
Tel me alſo to What concluſioun
Were membres made of generacioun
And of ſo parfyte Wiſe a Wight ywrought
Truſt me Wele they be nat made for naught
Gloſe Who ſo Wol and ſay bp and doun
That they Were made for purgacioun
Of bryne and of other thinges ſmale
Was eke to knowe a female from a male
And for no cauſe elles ſay ye no
The eyperience Wote Wele it is nat ſo
So that the clerkes With me be nat wrothe
I ſay thus that they be made for lothe
That is to ſay bothe for office and for eaſe
Of engendrure there We god nat diſpleaſe
Why ſhulde nat elles men in bokes ſette
That man ſhal yelde to his Wyf her dette
Where With ſholde he make his payement
If he ne vſed his ſely inſtrument
Then Were they made vpon a creature
To purge him and eke to engendre
But I ſay nat that euery Wight is holde
That hath ſuche harneys as I to you tolde
To go and vſe them in engendrure
Than ſholde men of chaſtite take no cure
Criſt Was a mayde and ſhapen as a man
And many a ſaynt ſithen the Worlde began
Yet lyued they euer in parfyte chaſtite

But I nyl enuye non virtuynite
Let them with brede of pured whete be fedde
And let to bs wyues hote barle brede
And yet with barlee brede as marke tel can
Oure lorde Jesus refresshed many a man
In suche estate as god hath cleppyd bs
I wyl perseuere I am nat precious
In wyfhode wyl I bse myn instrument
As frely as my maker hath it sent
If I be daungerous god yeue me sorowe
Myn husbonde shal it haue both eue and morowe
Whan that him lyst come forth and pay his dette
An husbonde wol I haue I wol nat lette
That shal be bothe my dettoure and my thral
And haue his tribulacioun with al
Upon his flesshe while that I am his wyf
The power I haue durynge al the lyf
Bothe of his propir body and nat he
Right thus the apostel tolde it me
And bad oure husbondes for to loue bs wele
Al this sentence me lyketh euerydele
Up stert the pardoner and that anone
Now dame quod he by god and by seynt Johñ
ye be a noble prechoure in this caas
I was aboute to wedde a wyf allas
What shold I by it on my flesshe so dere
yet had I lyuer wedde no wyf this yere
Abyde quod she my tale is nat begonne
Nay thou shalt drynke of another tonne
Or that I go shal sauoure worse than ale
And whan I haue tolde forth my tale
Of tribulacioun that is in mariage
Of which I am expert in al myn age

This is to say my self haue be the whippe
Than mayst thou chese whether thou wylt sippe
Of that tonne that I the shal broche
Be ware of it or thou to nygh approche
For I shalle telle ensamples mo than ten
Who so wol nat be ware by other men
By him shal other men corrected be
These same wordes writeth ptholome
Rede in his almegest and take it there
Dame I wolde praye you if youre wyl were
Sayde this pardonere as ye beggan
Tel forth youre tale spare for no man
And tech vs yonge men of youre practyke
Gladly quod she sithen it may you lyke
But that I pray to alle this company
If that I spele after my fantesy
As take nat a greef of that I say
For myn entent is but for to play
Now sires than wol I telle you forth my tale
As euer I must drynke wyne or ale
I shal say soth these husbondes that I hadde
Thre of them were gode and two were badde
The thre men were gode and riche and olde
Vnneth myght they the statute holde
In whiche they were bounden vnto me
ye wote wele what I mene parde
As helpe me god I laugh whan that I thynke
How pytously a nyght I made them to swynke
And by my fayth I yaue of them no store
They hadde me yeue theire londe and theire tresore
Me nedith nat to do them lenger diligence
To wynne theire loue or do them reuerence
They loued me so wele by god aboue

That ȝ ne tolde no deynte of her loue
A wyse woman wol be sy her euir in one
To gete her loue ye there she hath none
But sithen ȝ hadde them holly in myn honde
And after they had yeue me theire londe
What sholde ȝ take kepe them for to please
But if it were for my profet or for myn ease
ȝ helde them so a werke by my fey
That many a nyght they song wele a wey
The bacon was nat fet for them ȝ trowe
That som man hath in Essey at donmowe
ȝ gouerned them so wele after my lawe
That eche of them ful blisful was and fawe
To bryngge me gay thynges fro the fayre
They were ful fayne whan ȝ spake to them sayre
For god it wote ȝ chydde them spytously
Now herke hou ȝ bare me propirly
ye wise wyues that can vnderstonde
Thus sholde ye spekyn and bere them on honde
For half so boldly can there no man
Swere and lye as a woman can
ȝ say nat this by wyues that been wyse
But if it be whan they them mysauyse
A wyse wyf if that she can her gode
Shal bere him on honde the cow is wode
And take wytnesse of her owen mayde
Of her assent but herkneth what ȝ sayde
Syr olde haynard is this thyn array
Why is my nyghboures wyf so gay
She is honoured where euir she goth
ȝ sytte at home and haue no thrifty cloth
What dost thou at my nyghboures house
Is she so fayre art thou so amorous

What rowneſt thou with a mayde benedicite
Sir olde lechoure let thy iapes be
And if that I haue a goſſoppe or a frende
Without ony gylte thou chydeſt as a feende
That I walke and pley vnto his houſe
Thou comeſt home as dronken as a mouſe
And precheſt on thy benche with euyl preef
Thou ſayſt to me it is a grete myſcheif
To wedde a poure woman for coſtage
And if ſhe be riche of high parage
Thou ſayſt that it is a verry turmentry
To ſuffre her pryde and her melancoly
And if ſhe be fayre thou verry knaue
Thou ſayſt that euery holoure wol her haue
She may no while in chaſtite abyde
That is aſſayled on euery ſyde
Thou ſayſt ſome folke deſire vs for richeſſe
Som for oure ſhappe and ſom for oure fayrneſſe
And ſom for ſhe can other ſynge or daunce
And ſom for gentyleneſſe or for daliaunce
Som for her hondes and her armes ſmale
Thus goth alle to the deuyl by the tale
Thou ſayſt men may nat kepe a caſtel walle
It may ſo longe aſſayled be ouir alle
And if ſhe be foule thou ſayſt that ſhe
Couetyth euery man that ſhe may ſe
For as a ſpaynel ſhe wolde on him lepe
Tyl ſhe may fynde ſom man her to chepe
Ne none ſo grey goos goth ther in the lake
As ſayſt thou wol be withoute her make
And ſayſt it is an harde thyng for to wolde
A thyng that no man wol his thanke holde
Thus ſayſt thou bozelle whan thou goſt to bedde

And that no wise man nedith for to wedde
Ne noman that entendith vnto heuyn
With wylde thundre dynte and fyre leuyn
Moote thyn welked necke be to broke
Thou sayst a droppyng house and eke smoke
And chydyng wyues makeyn men flee
Oute of theire houses atones a benedicite
What apleth suche an olde man for to chyde
Thou sayst we wyues wyl oure vices hyde
Tyl we be fast and than we wol them shewe
Wele may that be a prouerbe of a shrewe
Thou sayst that oxen asses horse and houndes
They been assayed of dyuers stoundes
Basynslauers or that men them bye
Spones stoles and alle other husbondrye
And so by pottes clothes and aray
But folke of wyues make none assay
Tyl they be wedded toolde dotarde shrewe
And than sayst thou we wol oure vyces shewe
Thou sayst also that it displeasith me
But if thou wylt preyse my beaute
And but thou poure alday in my face
And clepe me fayre dame in euery place
And but thou make a fest that ilke day
That I was born and me fresshe and gay
And but thou do to my norice honoure
And to my chambre within my boure
And to my faders folke and myn allyes
Thou sayst thou olde barrelle ful of lyes
And also for that oure apprentice Janekyn
For his crispe heris shynyng as golde fyne
And for he squyreth me bothe vp and doun
yet hast thou caught a false suspectioun

I wyl him nat though thou were dede to morowe
But tel me this why hydest thou with sorowe
The keyes of thy cheste awey fro me
As wele it is my gode as thyn parde
What wenyst thou to make an ydiote of oure dame
Now by that lorde that clepyd is saynt Jame
Thou shalt nat both though thou were wode
Be mayster of my body and of my gode
That one thou shalt forgo maugre thyn eyn
What nedith the of me to enquere or pryen
I trowe thou woldest locke me in thy chest
Thou sholdest say gode wyf go where ye lyst
Take youre disporte I wyl leue no tales
I knowe you for a true wyf dame Alis
We loue no man that taketh kepe or charge
Where that we go we wol be at oure large
Of al maner men y blessid moot he be
The wyse Astrologyen dan protholome
That sayeth right thus in his almegest
Of alle men his wysdome is the best
That recketh nat who hath the worlde in honde
By this prouerbe thou shalt vnderstonde
Haue thou ynough what dar the reche or care
How merely that other folkes fare
For certis olde dotardes by youre leue
Ye shal haue quente ynogh at eue
For he is to grete a nygart that wol werne
A man to light a candel at his lantern
He shal neuer haue the lesse light parde
Haue thou ynough thou dar nat pleyne the
Thou sayst also if that we make vs gay
With clothing or with precious aray
That it is peryl of oure chastite

And With ſorowe thou muſt enforcen the
And ſay theſe wordes in the apoſtoles name
In habyte made With chaſtite and ſhame
ye Women ſhal apparayle you quod he
And nat in treſſed here and riche perre
As perles ne With golde ne clothes riche
After thy texte ne after thy rubryche
I Wyl nat Worche as moche as a knat
Thou ſayſt thus I Walke oute as a cat
But Who ſo Wol ſenge the cattes ſkyn
Than Wyl the cat duelle in his in
And if the cattes ſkyn be ſlyke and gay
She Wol nat duelle in his houſe half a day
But forth ſhe Wol or any day be dawed
To ſhewe her ſkyn and go a catirwawid
This is to ſay if I be gay ſir ſhrewe
I Wol renne oute my borel for to ſhewe
Syr olde foole What helpith the to eſpyen
Though thou pley argus With his hundreth eyen
To be my Warde corps as he may beſt
In feyth he ſhal nat kepe me but me lyſt
yet coude I make his berde ſo mote I the
Thou ſayſt eke that there be thynges thre
The Whiche thinges troubleyn al the erthe
And that no wight may endure the ferthe
O leue ſir ſhrewe Jeſus ſhort thy lyf
yet precheſt thou and ſayſt an hateful Wyf
Rekned is for one of theſe myſchaunces
Been there now none other reſemblaunces
That may be lyke youre parables vnto
But if a ſely Wyf be one of tho
Thou lyknieſt eke a Womannys lone to helle
To bareyn londe there Watez may nat duelle

Thou lyknest vs ehe also to wylde fyre
The more it brennyth the more it hath desire
To consume euery thyng that brent wolde be
Thou sayst right as wormys shenden a tre
Right so a wyf distroyeth her husbonde
This knowen they that been to wyues bonde
Lordynges right thus as ye haue vndrestonde
Bare I stynte myn olde husbondes on honde
That thus they sayde in theire dronkenesse
And alle was fals but as I tolde witnesse
Of Jankyn and of myn nece also
O lorde the pyne I dyd them and the wo
Ful gyltles by goddes swete pyne
For as any horse I coude byte and whyne
I coude playne though I were in the gylt
Or elles I hadde oft tymes be spylt
Who so cometh first to the mylle first he grynt
I playned first so were oure werres stynt
They were ful glade for to excuse them blyue
Of thing whiche they neuer agylted theire lyue
Of wenches wolde I bere them ful sore on honde
Whan that for sicke vnneth mygth they stonde
yet tikled I hys hert for that he
wende that I of him had so grete cheerte
I swore that alle my walkyng oute by nyght
Was for to spy wenches that he dight
Vndre that coloure had I many a mirthe
For al suche thyng was gyue vs in oure birthe
Disceyte weppyng spynnyng god hath geue
To women kyndly while that they lyue
And thus of one thing I may auaunte me
At the ende I haue the bettre in eche degre
By sleyght or force or by som maner thyng

Or by contynual murmure or grutchyng
Namely a bedde hadde they myschaunce
There wolde I chyde and do them no plesaunce
I wolde no lengere a bedde abyde
If that I felt his arme ouir my syde
Tyl he hadde made his raunson vnto me
Than wolde I suffre him do his nycete
And therfore euery man this tale I telle
Wyn who so may for alle is for to selle
With empty hondes men may no hawkes lure
For wynnyng wolde I alle his lyst endure
And make me than a feyned appetyte
And yet in bacon hadde I neuir delyte
That made me that euir I wolde them chyde
For though the pope hadde sitten them besyde
I wolde nat spare them at theire owne borde
For by my trouthe I quytte them euery worde
As so helpe me god omnypotent
Though I right nowe sholde make my testament
I owe them nat one worde that it nys quytte
I brought it so aboute by my wytte
That they must yeue it vp al for the beste
Or elles hadde we neuir be in reste
For though he loked as wylde as a lyoun
yet shulde he fayle of his conclusioun
Than wolde I say gode leef take kepe
How mekely lokith wylkyn oure shepe
Come nere my spouse let me ba thy cheke
ye shulde be al pacient and meke
And haue a swete spyced conscience
Sithen ye so speke of Jobbes pacience
Suffreth alwey sithen ye can so wele preche
And but ye do certayne we wol you teche

It is fayre a man to haue his wyf in pees
One of vs two must bowe doutles
And sithen a man is euir more resonable
Than a woman is ye must be sufferable
What ayleth you to gruche and grone
It is for ye wolde haue my quente alone
Why take it to haue it euerydele
Peyr I shrewe you but ye loue it wele
For if I wolde selle my bele chose
I coude walke as fresshe as a rose
But I wol kepe it for youre owne tothe
ye be to blame by god I say you sothe
Suche maner wordes hadde we on honde
Now wol I speke of my fourth husbonde
My fourth husbonde was a reueloure
This is to say he hadde a paramoure
And I was yong and ful of ragery
Styborn and stronge and plyant as a py
Tho coude I daunce vnto an harpe smale
And synge ywys as any nyghtyngale
Whan I hadde dronke a draught of swete wyne
Metellius the foule chorle the swyne
That with a staf beraft his wyf her lyf
For she dranke wyne, and I hadde be his wyf
He sholde nat haue daunted me from drynke
And after wyne on venus must I thynke
And also syker as colde engendreth hayle
A likorous mouthe must haue a lycherous tayle
In woman vynolent is no defence
This knowen lechoures by experience
But lord Cryst whan it remembreth me
Upon my youthe and on my iolyte
It tykleth me aboute my herte rote

Vnto this day it doth myn herte bote
That I haue hadde my worlde as in my tyme
But age allas that al wol envenym
Hath me bireft my beaute and my pythe
Let go fare wele the deuyl go therwith
The floure is go ther nys no more to telle
The bren as I best may now must I selle
Now to be right mery wyl I fonde
Now wyl I telle of my fourth husbonde
I say he hadde a grete dispyte
That I in any other hadde delyte
But he was quytte by god and by seynt Iose
I made him of the same wode a croce
Nat of my body in no foule maneze
But certaynly I made folke suche chere
That in his owne grece I made him frye
For angre and for verry ielousye
By god in erthe I was his purgatory
For which I hope his soule be in glorye
For god it wote he sat ful ofte and song
Whan that his sho ful bytterly him wronge
Ther was no wight saue god and he that wyst
In many wyse how sore I him twyst
He dyed whan I cam fro ierusalem
And lyeth y graue vndre the rode beem
Al is his tombe nat so curius
As was the sepulcre of him Darius
Which that appelles wrought so subtelly
It is but wast to burye him preciously
Let him fare wele god yeue his soule gode rest
He is nowe in his graue and leyde in his chest
Now of my fyfte husbonde wyl I telle
God let his soule neuir come in helle

And yet was he to me moost shrewe
That feleth on my ribbes alle by rewe
And euir shalle vnto myn endyng day
But in oure bedde he was ful fresshe and gay
And ther withalle he coude so wele me glose
Whan that he wolde haue my bele chose
That though he hadde bette me on euery bone
He coude wynne my loue agayne anone
I trowe I loued him best for that he
Was of his loue so daungerous vnto me
We women haue if that I shal nat lye
In this matere a queynte fantesy
Wayte what thyng we may nat lygthtly haue
Ther after wyl we crye alday and craue
Forbede vs thyng and desiren we
Prees on vs fast and than wol we fle
With daunger vtter we alle oure chaffare
Grete prees at market maketh dere ware
And to grete chepe is holden a lytel pryce
This knowith euery woman that is wyse
My fyfte husbonde god his soule blesse
Whiche I toke for loue and no richesse
He somtyme was a clerke of Oxenforde
And hadde left scole and went at home to borde
With my gossop tho duellyng in oure toun
God haue her soule her name was alysoun
She knew me myn hert and eke my pryuite
Bettyr than oure parisshe preest so moot I the
To her bewreyed I my counseyl alle
For hadde myn husbonde pyssed agenst a walle
Or do a thyng that he sholde haue cooste his lyst
To her and also to a nother worthy wyf
And to my nece whiche that I loued wele

I wolde haue tolde his counseyl euerydele
And so I dyd ful ofte god it wote
That made his face ful ofte rede and hote
For verry shame and blamed him selue that he
Hadde tolde to me so grete a pryuite
And so befyl that onys in a lente
So ofte tyme I to my gossop went
For euir I loued to be gay alwey
And for to walke in Marche Apryl and May
Fro house to house to here of sondry tales
That Janyry clerke and my gossop Dame alys
And I my self into the feldes went
My husbonde was at london al that lent
I hadde the bettre leyser for to pley
And for to see and eke for to be sey
Of lusty folke what wyst I where my grace
Was shapen for to be or in what place
Therfore I made my vysitacions
To vigyles and to processions
To prechynge eke and to pylgramages
To pleyes of myracles and to mariages
And wered vpon my gay scarlet gytes
These wormes ne these mothes ne these mytes
Vpon my parel frayde them neuir a dele
And wotest thou why for they were vsed wel
Now wol I telle forth what happed me
I say that in the feldes walked we
Tyl truly that we hadde suche daliaunce
This clerke and I that of my purueaunce
I spake to him and sayde that he
If I were wydowe sholde wedde me
For certayn I say you for no bolaunce
yet was I neuir without purueaunce

Of mariage ne other thynges ethe
Icholde a mouse herte nat worth a lethe
That hath but one hole for to stert to
And if that fayle thay is al y do
Ibare him on honde he hadde enhaunced me
Myn dame taught me forsothe that sotelte
And ethe I sayde I mette of him al nyght
He wolde haue slayne me as I ley vpright
And al my bedde was ful of berry blode
But yet I hope truly ye shal do me gode
For blode betokeneth golde as I was taught
And al was fals I dremed of him right naught
But as I folowed ay my dampes lore
As wele of that as of other thynges more
And now sir let me se what sholde I sayn
Aha by god I haue my tale agayn
Whan that my fourth husbonde was on bere
I wepte algate and made a sory chere
As bynes must for it is the vsage
And with my hyrchef I cleryd my visage
But for that I was purupde of a make
I wepte fullytel I dar vndertake
To chirche was my husbonde borne on morowe
With oure nyghboures that for him made sorow
And Jankyn oure clerke was one of tho
As helpe me god whan that I sawe him go
After the bere me thought he hadde a peyre
Of legges and fete so clene and ethe so fayre
That alle my hert I yaf vnto his holde
He was I trowe twenty wynter olde
But I was fourty if I shal say the soth
But yet I hadde alwey a coltes toth
Gappe tothed I was but that becam me wele

Ihadde the prynte of seynt venus sele
As helpe me god I was a ful lusty one
And fayre and riche and yong and wele begone
And truly as my husbondes tolde me
Ihadde the best quente that myght be
For certis I am alle fully venerian
In felyng and in my hert is marcian
Venus me yaue my lust and lyherousnesse
And mars yaue me my sturdy hardynesse
Myn ascendaunt was taure and mars therin
Allas allas that euir loue was synne
I folowed ay myn inclinacioun
By vertue of my constellacioun
That made me that I coude nat withdrawe
My chambre of venus fro a gode fela we
yet haue I martis marke vpon my face
And also in an other pryuy place
For god so wysly be my saluacioun
I loupd neuir by no discrecioun
But euir folowed myn appetite
Al were he long shorte blache or white
I toke no kepe so that he lyked me
How poure he was ne eke of what degre
What sholde I say but at the monethes ende
This ioly clerke Jankyn that was so hende
Hath weddyd me with grete solempnyte
And to him yaue I alle londe and fee
That euir was yeue me ther bifore
But afterwarde me repented it ful sore
He nolde suffre nothyng of my lyst
By god he smote me onys on the lyst
On the cheke. for I rent oute of his boke a leef
That of the strok myn ere wext al deef

Styborne I was as is a lyoneſſe
And of my tunge a verry iangelreſſe
And walke I wolde as I doon hadde biforn
Fro houſe to houſe al though he hadde it ſworn
For whiche he oft tyme wolde preche
And me of olde Romaunces geſtes teche
How the ſymplicius gallus left his wyf
And her forſoke for terme of alle his lyf
Nat but for onys oppyn heded he her ſay
Lokyng oute of his doze vpon a day
Anothez Romayne tolde he me by name
But for his wyf was at a ſomeres game
Without his wyttyng he forſoke her ehe
And thay wolde he vpon his bible ſeke
That ilke prouerbe of Eccleſiaſte
Where he comaundith and byddeth faſt
Wey ſholde nat ſuffre theire wyues to royle aboute
Than wolde he ſay thus Withouten doute
Who ſo byldith his houſe alle of ſalowes
And prychith his blynde horſe ouir the falowes
And ſuffrith his wyf to ſeke halowes
Is worthy to be honged on the galowes
But al for naught I ſet it nat an hawe
Of al his prouerbes ne of alle his olde ſawe
Ne I wol nat of him corrected be
I hate them that tellen my vyces on to me
And ſo do mo god bote of vs than I
This made hym wode With me al vtterly
I wolde nat forbere him in no caas
Now wol I ſay you ſoth by ſeint Thomas
Why that I rent oute of his boke a leef
For whiche he ſmote me ſo that I was deef
He hadde a boke that gladly both nyght and day

For his disporte he wolde rede alway
He cleppyd it Valery and Theophraste
At the whiche boke he lough alwey ful fast
And eke ther was a clerke somtyme in Rome
A cardynalle that hight seynt Jerome
That made a boke ayenst Jouynyan
In whiche boke ther was eke Tertulan
Crisippus Trotula and Helowis
That was Abbesse nat fer from Paris
And eke the paraboles of wyse Salamon
Ouydes art and eke bokes many one
And al these were bounde in one volume
And euery day and night was his custume
Whan he hadde leyser and any vacacioun
Fro al other worldly occupacioun
To redyn on this boke of wyched wyues
Ne knewe we of them moo legendes and lyues
Than be of gode wyues in the byble
For trustith wele it is an impossible
That any clerke wolde spek gode of wyues
But if it be of holy seyntes lyues
Ne of none other women neuir the mo
Who prentyd the lyoun telle me who
By god if women hadde wryten storyes
As clerkes haue within their Oratoryes
They wolde haue wryten of men more wyckednesse
Than al the marke of Adam may redresse
The childrey of mercury and venus
Been in their workyng ful contrarious
Mercury louyth wysdome and science
And venus loueth ryotte and dispence
And for their dyuerse disposicioun
Eche fayleth in others ex altacioun

as thus god wote Mercury is desolate
In piscis where venus is exaltate
And venus fayleth there Mercury is reysed
Therfore women of no clerke is preysed
The clerke whan he is olde and may naught do
Of venus werkes nat worth his olde sho
Than sytteth he doun and wryteth in his dotage
That women can nat kepe theire mariage
But now to purpos why I tolde the
That I was beten for a bokebarde
Upon a nyght Jankyn that was oure syre
Redde on his boke as he sat by the fyre
Of eue first that for her wrechednesse
Was al mankynde brought to wrechednesse
For whiche that Jesu criste him selue was slayne
That bought vs with his hert blode agayne
Lo here expresse of women may ye fynde
That woman was the losse of alle mankynde
Tho redde he me how Sampson lost his heris
Slepyng. his lemman kytte them with her sheres
Through whiche treason lost he bothe his eyen
Tho redde he me if that I shal nat lyen
Of hercules and of his Dyanyre
That causith him to sette him selue a fyre
No thyng forgate he the sorowe and the wo
That socrates hadde with his wyues two
How Eyantippa cast pysse vpon his hede
This selv man sat stylle as he were dede
He wyped his hede nomore durst he sayn
But or the thundre stynt there cometh rayne
Of pasipha that was the quene of Crete
For shrewdnesse him thought the tale swete
Fy spek nomore it is a grisly thyng

Of her horrible lust and her lykynge
Of Cletemystra for her high lecherye
That falsly made her husbonde to dye
He redde it with ful good deuocioun
He tolde me ek for what conclusioun
Amphiorax at Thebes lost his lyf
Myn husbonde hadde a legende of his wyf
Eriphylem that for an ouche of golde
Hath prycely vnto the grekes tolde
Where that her husbonde hyd him in a place
For which he hadde at Thebes a sory grace
Of Lyma tolde he me and of Lucy
They both made theire husbondes for to dy
That one for loue that other was for hate
Lyma her husbonde vpon an euyn late
Enpoysond him for that she was his foo
Lucia lykerous loued her husbond so
For he sholde algates on her thynke
She yaue vnto him suche a loue drynke
That he was dede or it was at morowe
And thus algate husbondes hadde sorowe
Than tolde he me hou that Latumeus
Compleyned hou that fel may Arrius
That in his gardyn growed suche a tre
On which he sayde that his wyues thre
Hanged them self for theire hertes dyspytous
O leue brother sayde than this Arrius
yeue me a plante of that blissed tre
And in my gardyn planted shal it be
Of latter date of wyues hath he redde
That some haue slayne theire husbondes abedde
And leet the lichoure dight them alle the nyght
Whiles that the corps lay in the floor vpright

And ſom haue dryue nayles in their brayn
Whiles that they ſlept & thus they haue them ſlayn
Som haue yeue them poyſon in theire drynke
He ſpake more harme than herte may thynke
And therwithalle he coude mo prouerbes
Than in this worlde growe graſſe or herbes
Better is quod he thyn habitacioun
Be with a lyoun or a foule dragoun
Than with a woman vſynge for to chyde
Better is quod he hight in his roof abyde
Than with an angry wyf doun in the houſe
They be ſo wycked and ſo contrarious
They hate that theire huſbondes loue ay
He ſayde a woman caſt her ſhame away
Whan ſhe caſt of her ſmoke and ferthermo
A fayre woman but ſhe be chaſte alſo
Is lyke a golde ryngge on a ſowes noſe
Who wolde leue or who wolde ſuppoſe
The wo that in myn herte was and pyne
And whan I ſawe that he wolde neuer fyne
To rede on his corſed boke al nyght
Al ſodenly thre leeps haue I pyght
Out of his boke right as he reode and eke
I with my fyſt ſo toke him on the cheke
That in oure fyre he fyl bakward a doun
And vp he ſtert as doth a wode lyoun
And with his fiſte he ſmote me on the hede
That in the floore I ley as were dede
And whan he ſawe how ſtyl that I lay
He was agaſt and wolde haue fledde away
Til at the laſt I oute of my ſwoune abrayde
O haſt thou ſlayn me falſe theef I ſayde
And for my londe thus haſt thou murdred me

Or I be dede yet Wol I onys kysse the
And nere he cam and kneled fayre a doun
And sayde dere sustre sWete Alisoun
As helpe me god I shal the neuir smyte
That I haue do it is thy selfe to wyte
Forgeue it me and that I the beseke
And yet eft sones I hytte him on the cheke
And sayde theef thus moche I am beWreke
Now Wol I dye I may no lengere speke
But at the last With moche care and Wo
We fyl accorded by oure selfyn tWo
He yaue me the brydel in myn honde
To haue the gouernaunce of house and londe
And after of his tonge and of his honde also
And made him brenne his boke anone tho
And than Whan I hadde goten vnto me
The maystre and eke the soueraynte
And that he sayde myn oWne true wyf
Doth as you lyst al the terme of youre lyf
Kepe thyn honoure and eke myn estate
And after that day We hadde neuir debate
God helpe me so I Was to him as kynde
As any wyf from Denmarke vnto ynde
And also true and so Was he to me
I pray to god that sytteth in magesty
So blesse his soule for his mercy dere
Now Wol I say my tale if ye Wol here
t The frere lough Whan he hadde herd al this
Now dame quod he so haue I ioye and blis
This is a long preambe of a tale
And Whan the Sompnoure herde the frere gale
Lo quod the Sompnoure for goddes armes tWo
A frere Wol entromette him euir mo

Lo gode men a flye and ehe a frere
Wol falle in euery mannys disshe and matere
What spekest thou of preambulacioun
What amble or trotte or pysse or sytte a doun
Thou letteste oure disporte in this matere
ye wylt thou so sir Sompnoure quod the frere
Now by my fayth I shalle or that I go
Telle of a sompnoure suche a tale or two
That alle folke shal laugh in this place
Now elles frere I beshrewe thy face
Quod this Sompnoure, and I beshrewe me
But if I telle tales two or thre
Of freres or that I come to Sydyngbourn
That I shal make the sore for to morne
For wele I woot thy pacience is gone
Oure hoost cryde pease and that anone
And sayde let the woman telle her tale
ye fare as folkes that dronke been of ale
Do dame telle forth youre tale and that is best
Al redy sir quod she right as you lyst
If I haue licence of this worthy frere
yes dame quod he telle forth and I wol here

Here endith the wyf of Bathes prologue
And here begynneth her Tale

In olde dayes of kyng Arthoure
Of whiche Britons spekē grete honoure
Al was this londe fulfylled of fayrye
The elfe quene with her ioly company
Daunced ful ofte in many a grene mede
This was the olde opynyon as I rede
I speke of many an hundred yeres a goo

But nowe can noman se none elphees mo
For now the grete charite and prayers
Of lymytoures and other holy freres
That serchen euery londe and euery streme
As thyche as motes in the sonne beame
Blessyng halles chambers kychens and boures
Cytes borughes castelles and hiyh toures
Thorpes barnes shepens and deyres
This makith that there be no feryes
For there as wont was to walke an elphe
There walkith now the lymytoure him silf
In vndermeles and in mornynges
And sayth his matyns and his holy thynges
As he goth forth in his lymytacioun
Women may now go sauely vp and doun
Vndre euery busshe and vndre euery tre
There is none other incubus but he
And he ne wolde do them any dishonoure
And so befyl that this kyng Arthoure
Hadde in his house a lusty bacheler
That on a day cam rydyng fro the ryuere
And happed that allone as he was born
He sawe a mayde walkyng him biforn
Of whiche mayde anone maugre her hede
By verry force he beraft her maydenhede
For whiche oppressioun was suche clamoure
And suche pursute vnto vnto kyng Arthoure
That dampned was this knyght for to be dede
By course of lawe and sholde haue lost his hede
Parauenture suche was the statute tho
But that the quene and other ladies moo
So longe prayde the kyng of grace
Tyl he hislyf graunted in that place

And yaue him to the quene alle at hez wylle
To chese whether ſhe wolde him ſaue oz ſpylle
The quene thanked the kyng with alle hez myght
And aftez this thus ſpake ſhe to the knyght
Whan ſhe ſawe hez tyme vpon a day
Thou ſtondeſt yet quod ſhe in ſuche aray
That of thy lyf yet haſt thou no ſurete
I graunt thy lyf if thou canſt telle me
What thing it is that women mooſt deſiren
Beware and kepe thy necke from iren
And if thou canſt nat telle it anone
I ſhal the yeue leue yet foz foz to gone
A twelue month and a day to ſeche and lere
An aunſwere ſufficiaunt in this matere
And ſurete wol I haue oz that thou pace
Thy body foz to yelde in this place
Woo was this knyght and ſozoufully he ſighteth
But he may nat do alle as himlyketh
And at the laſt he choſe him foz to wende
And come ageyn right at the yeres ende
With ſuche aunſwere as god wolde him puruey
And taketh his leue and wendith forth his wey
He ſekith euery houſe and euery place
Where as he hopith foz to fynde grace
To wytte what thyng women loued mooſt
But he coude aryuen in no cooſt
There as he myght fynde in this matere
Two creatures accordyng in fere
Some ſayd women loued beſt richeſſe
Some ſayde honoure ſom ſayde iolynneſſe
Som ſayde riche aray ſom ſayde luſt a bedde
And ofte tymes to be wydowe and to be wedde
Som ſayde that we be in hert mooſt eaſed

Whan we be flatred and y pleased
He goth ful nygh the soth I wol nat lye
A man shal best wynne vs with flaterye
And with attendaunce and with besynesse
Been we ylymed both more and lesse
And some sayd that we wolde loue best
For to be fre and do right as vs lyst
And that no man reprcue vs of oure vyce
But say that we be wyse and nothing nyce
For truly ther is none of vs alle
If any wight wol clawe vs on the galle
That we nyl lyke for that he sayth vs sothe
Assay quod he shal fynde it what it doth
For be we neuir so vicious with ynne
We wolde beholden wyse and cleen oute of synne
And some sayde grete delyte haue we
For to beholde stable and eke secre
And in one purpos stedfastly to dwelle
And nat to bewraye that men vs telle
But that tale is nat worth a rake stele
Parde we women can nothing hele
Wytnes on Myda. wol ye here the tale
Ouide among other thinges smale
Sayde Myda hadde vndre his long heres
Growyng vpon his hede two asses eres
The whiche vyce he hadde as he best myght
Fulle subtelly from euery mannys sight
That saue his wyf they wyst it no mo
He louyd her most and trustyd hir also
He prayed hir that to no manir creature
She shorde telle of his foule disfigure
She swore him that for alle the worlde to wynne
She nolde do that velony ne synne

To make her husbonde to haue so foule a name
She wolde it nat for her owne shame
But neuirtheleſſe she thought that she dyde
That she so long sholde a counseyl hyde
She thoughte it was so sore aboute her herte
That nedes some worde her must a stert
And sithen she durst telle it to no man
Down by the marsshe fast by she ran
Tyl she cam there her hert was in fyre
And as a bytoure blombith in the myre
She leyde her mouthe vnto the water doun
Bewrey me nat thou water with thy soun
Quod she. to the I telle it and to nomo
Myn husbonde hath long assheres two
Nowe is myn hert al hole now is it oute
I myght no lengere kepe it oute of doute
Here may ye se though we a tyme abyde
yet oute it must we can no counseyle hyde
The remenaunt of the tale if ye wol here
Redith Ouyde and there ye may it lere
This knyght of whom my tale is specially
Whan that he sawe he myght nat come therby
This is to say what women louen moost
Within his breest so sorowfulle was his goost
But home he goth he myght nat sojourne
The day was come that homwarde must he tourne
And in his wey as happed him to ryde
In alle his care vndre a forest syde
Where as he sawe vpon a daunce go
Of ladies foure and twenty and yet mo
Towarde whiche daunce he drewe ful yerne
In hope that he sholde som wysdom lern
But certaynly or that he cam fully there

Vanyſſhed was this daunce he nyſt where
No creature ſawe he that bare lyf
Saue oon the grene he ſawe ſyttyng a wyf
A fouler wight ther myght no man deuyſe
Agayn this knyght this olde wyf gan ryſe
And ſayde ſir knyght here forth lyth no wey
But telle me what ye ſeke by youre fay
Parauenture it may the better be
Thiſe olde folke can moche thyng quod ſhe
My leue modre quod this knyght certayn
I nam but dede but if that I can ſayn
What thyng it is that women moſt deſire
Coude ye me wyſſhe I wolde quyte wele youre hire
Plight me thy trouthe here in my honde quod ſhe
The neyt thyng that I requyre the
Thou ſhalt it do if it lye in thy myght
And I wol telle it you or it be nyght
Haue here my trouthe quod the knyght I graunt
Than quod ſhe I dar wele make auaunte
Thy lyf is ſauf for I wol ſtonde therby
Upon my lyf the quene wol ſay as I
Let ſee whiche is the proudeſt of them alle
That werith on other knychief or calle
That dar ſay nay of that I wol the teche
Let vs go forth without more ſpeche
Tho rowned ſhe a pyſtel in his ere
And badde him be glade and haue no fere
When they be comen to the courte this knyght
Sayde he kept his day as he haddе hight
And redy was his aunſwere as he ſayde
Ful many a noble wyf and many a mayde
And many a wydowe for that they be wyſe
The quene her ſelf ſittyng as iuſtiſe

Assembled been this aunswere for to here
And afterwarde this knyght was boden tappere
To euery wight was comaunded silence
And that the knyght shulde tel in audience
What thyng that worldly women loue best
This knyght stode nat styl as doth a beest
But to his questioun anone aunswerde
With manly voyce that al the courte it herde
My liege lady thyn generall quod he
Women desire to haue souerayntee
As wele of their husbondes as of their loue
And for to be in maystrye aboue
This is youre moost desire though ye me kylle
Doth as you lyst I am here at youre wyl
In al the courte ne was ther wyf ne mayde
Ne wydowe that contraried that he sayde
But sayde he was worthy to haue his lyf
And with that worde vp stert this olde wyf
Whiche that the knyght sonde syttyng on the grene
Mercy quod she my souerayne lady quene
Er that youre courte departe as do me right
I taught this aunswere vnto this knyght
For whiche he plyght me his trouthe there
The first thyng I wolde him requere
He wolde it do if it lay in his myght
Before this courte thyn pray I the sir knyght
Quod she. that thou me take vnto thy wyf
For wele thou wotest that I haue saued thy lyf
If I swere fals I were nay vpon thy fey
The knyght aunswerd allas and wel a wey
I wote right wele that suche was my beheest
For goddes loue chees a newe request
Take alle my gode and let my body go

Nay thay quod ſhe I ſhrewe vs bothe two
For thoughe that I be foule olde and poure
I wol nat for al the metal and the oure
That vndre the grounde lyth or aboue
But I thy wyf were and ehe thy loue
Thy loue quod he nay but my dampnacioun
Allas that euir any of my nacioun
So foule ſholde euir diſperaged be
But al for naught the ende is thus that he
Conſtreyned was nedes muſt he her wedde
And take his olde wyf and go to bedde
Now wolde ſome men ſay parauenture
For my negligence I do no cure
To telle you the ioye and alle the arraye
That at the feſt was that ilke day
To whiche thyng ſhortly I aunſwere ſhalle
I ſay ther was no feſt ne ioye at alle
There nas but heuynes and moche ſorowe
For pryuely he wedded her by the morowe
And al day after hydde him as an owle
So wo was him his wyf loked ſo foule
Grete was the wo that the knyght had in thought
Whan he was with his wyf a bedde y brought
He walueth and he turneth to and fro
His olde wyf lay ſymplyng euirmo
And ſayde o dere huſbonde benedicite
Farith euery knyght thus with his wyf as ye
Is this the lawe of kyng Arthours hous
Is euery knyght of his loue ſo daungerous
I am youre owne loue and ehe youre wyf
I am ſhe whiche ſaued hath youre lyf
And certis yet I dyd you neuir vnright
Why fare ye thus with me the firſt nyght

ye fare lyke a man hadde loſt his wytte
what is my gylte for goddes loue tel me it
And it ſhal be amended if that I may
Amendyd quod this knyght allas nay nay
It wol nat be amended neuir the moo
Thou arte ſo lothly and ſo olde alſo
And therto comen of ſolowe a kynde
That lytel wondre is though I walow and wynde
So wolde god quod he myn herte wolde breſt
Is this quod ſhe the cauſe of youre vnreſt
ye certayn quod he no wondre it is
Now ſir quod ſhe I coude amende alle this
If that me lyſt or it be daies thre
So wele ye myght bere you vnto me
But for ye ſpeke of ſuche gentylneſſe
As is deſcended oute of olde riches
That therfore ye ſhulde be gentylmen
Suche erogaunce is nat worth an henne
Loke who is mooſt vertuous alwey
Pryuy and apert and mooſt entendyth ay
To do the gentyleſt dedes that he can
Take him for the gentileſt gentylman
Cryſte wol we clayme of him oure gentylneſſe
Nat of oure eldres for theire olde richeſſe
For though they yeue vs alle theire heritage
For whiche we clayme to be of high parage
yet may they nat bequeth for no thyng
To none of vs theire vertuous lyuyng
That made them gentylmen called to be
And badde vs folowe them in ſuche degre
Wele can the wiſe poete of florence
That hight dauntе ſpeke of this ſentence
Lo in ſuche maner ryme is dauntes tale

Ful ſelden vp ryſeth by his braunches ſmale
Proues of man for god of his godenes
Wol that of him we clayme oure gentylnes
For of oure eldersmay we nothyng clayme
But temporalle thyng that may hurte and mayme
Eke euery wight wote this aſwele as I
If gentylnes were plaunted naturally
Vnto a certayn lynage doun the lyne
Pryuy and apert than wol they neuir fyne
To do of gentylnes the feyre office
They myght do no velony or vyce
Take fyre and bere it in the derkeſt houſe
Bitwixe this and the mount of Cancaſus
And let men ſhytte the doores and go thenne
yet wol the fyre as fayrely and brenne
As twenty thouſand men myght it beholde
Hir office naturally ay wol he holde
Vp peryl of my lyf tyl that it dye
Here may ye ſe how that gentrye
Is nat anneyed to poſſeſſioun
Suche folke ne doth there operacioun
Alwey as doth the fyre lo in his kynde
For god it wote men may ful ofte fynde
A lordes ſonne do ſhame and velony
And he that wol haue pryce of his gentrye
For he was born of a gentyl houſe
And hadde his elders noble and vertuous
And wyl him ſelf do no gentyl dedes
Ne folowe his gentyl auncetours that dede is
He is nat gentyl be he duke be he erle
For vyleyns ſynful dedes make a cherle
For gentylneſſe nys but the renome
Of thyn auncetoures for theire high bounte

Whiche is a straunge thynge to thy persone
Thy gentylnes cometh fro god alone
Thanne cometh oure verry gentylnes of grace
It was no thyng biqueathen vs with oure place
Thynketh how noble as sayth Valerius
Was that Romayn Tulius Hostilius
That oute of pouerte roose to high noblesse
Redith Seneke and redith eke Boece
There shal ye se expres that no drede is
That he is gentyl that doth gentyl dedes
And therfore leue husbonde thus I conclude
Were it that myn auncetours were rude
yet may the high god and so hope I
Graunte me grace to lyue vertuously
Thanne am I vertuous whan I begyn
To lyue vertuously and do alwey synne
And there as ye of pouerte me repreue
That high god on whome holy we beleue
In wylful pouerte chees to lede his lyf
And certis euery man mayden and wyf
May vnderstonde that Jesus heuyn kyng
Ne wolde nat chese a vycious lyuyng
Glade pouerte is a ful honest thyng certayn
This wol Seneke and other clerkes sayn
Who so that holdith him payed of his pouert
I holde him ryche and he hadde nat a shert
He that coueitith he is a ful poure wight
For he wolde haue that is nat in his myght
But he that naught hath ne coueitith to haue
Is riche al though ye holde him but a knaue
Verry pouert is synne propirly
Juuenal spekith therof ful merely
The poure man whan he goth by the wey

Bifore the theuys he may synge and play
Pouert is hateful gode and as I gesse
A fulle grete brynger oute of besynesse
A grete amender eke of sapience
To him that taketh it in pacience
Pouerte is this al though it seme elenge
Possessioun that noman wolde gladly chalenge
Pouerte ful ofte whan a man is low
Maketh his god and eke him self to knowe
Pouerte a spectakyl is as thynketh me
Through whiche he may his verry frendes se
And therfore sir sithen theryn ye be greued
Of my pouerte let me nomore be reprenyd
Now sir there as of elde ye repreue me
And certis sir though none auctorite
Were in the boke ye gentylles of honoure
Say that men shulde ay olde wight fauoure
And clepe it fader for their gentylnesse
And auctoures shal I synde as I gesse
Now there as ye say I am foule and olde
Than drede ye nat to be made cocholde
For sylthe elde and foule so mot I the
Been grete wardeyns upon chastite
But natheles sithen I know youre delyte
I shal fulfylle youre worldly appetyte
Chees now quod she one of these thynges twey
To haue me olde and foule tyl that I dey
And be to you a true humble wyf
And neuer you displease in alle my lyf
Or elles ye shal haue me yong and feyre
And take youre auenture of the repeyre
That to youre house shalbe bicause of me
Or in some other place may wele be

Now chees Whether that ye lyketh
This knyght auyseth him and syketh
But at the last he sayd in this manere
My lady my loue my Wyf so dere
I put me fully in youre gouernaunce
Chese it youre self Whiche may be moze plesaunce
And moost honoure to you and me also
I do no force the Whether of the two
But as you lyketh it suffiseth to me
Than haue I gote of you the mastrye quod she
Sithen I may chese and gouerne you as me lyst
ye certis Wyf quod he I holde it for the best
Kys me quod she We be no lengere Wrothe
For by my trouthe I Wol be to you Bothe
That is to say Bothe fayre and ehe gode
I pray to god that I must sterue Wode
But I to you be also gode and true
As euir Was Wyf sithen the Worlde Was newe
And but I be to moroWe as fayre to sene
As any lady empresse or quene
That is betWiyte the este and the West
Doth With my lyf and deth as ye lyst
And so they slepte tyl it Was moroWe gray
And then she sayde Whan it Was day
Cast by the curteyn lohe how it is
And Whan the knyght saWe verely al this
That she so fayre Was and so yong therto
For ioye he hynt her in his armes two
His herte Was bathed in a bathe of blis
A thousand tyme aroWe he gan her kys
She obeyed him in euery thyng
That myght do him plesaunce or lykyng
And thus they lyue vnto their lyues ende

And parfyte loye and Jesu crist vs sende
Husbondes meke yong and fresshe abedde
And grace to ouirlyue them that we wedde
And ek I pray Jesus shorte their lyues
That wol nat be gouerned by their wyues
And olde and angry nygardes in dispence
God sende them sone a verry pestilence

Here endith the tale of the wyf of Bathe
And here begynneth the Freres prologue

This noble lymytour this worthy frere
He made alwey a maner louryng chere
Vpon the sompnoure but for honestye
No vyleyns worde as yet to him spake he
But at the last he sayde vnto the wyf
Now dame quod he god yeue you right good lyf
ye haue here touched also moot I thee
In scole matere a ful grete difficultye
ye haue sayde moche good thyng right wele I sey
But dame as here as ye rydey by the way
Vs nedith nat to speke but of game
And lete auctoritees on goddes name
To prechyng and to scole of clergye
And if it lyke vnto this company
I wol you of a Sompnoure tel a game
Pardee ye may wele knowe by the name
That of a sompnoure may no good be sayde
I pray that none of you be euyl appayed
A sompnoure is a rynner vp and doun
With maundmentes for fornycacioun
And is y bete at euery townes ende
Oure hoost thay spake a fire ye sholde be hende

And curteys as a man of youre astate
In company We Wol haue no debate
Telleth youre tale and let the sompnoure be
Nay quod the sompnoure let him say by me
What so him lyst Whan it cometh to my lot
By god I shal him quyte euery grot
I shal him telle Whiche a grete honoure
It is to be a flaterynge lymptoure
And of many other manere cryme
Whiche nedith nat to reherce at this tyme
And his office I shalle him telle y wys
Oure hoost aunswerde peas nomore of this
And after this he sayde vnto the frere
Telle forth youre tale myn owne maystere dere

Here endith the freres prologue
And begynneth his tale



Hyldom ther was dwellyng in my countre
W An archedekyn a man of hygh degre
That boldly dyd vele execucioun
In punysshyng of fornycacion
Of wychecraft and eke of baudrye
Of diffamacioun and auoutre
Of chirche reuys and of testamentes
Of contracte and of lacke of sacramentes
Of vsury and eke of symonye also
But certis lechoures dyd he gretest woo
They sholde synge if that they were hent
And smale tythers also were foule shent
If any persone vpon them pleyn
There myght asterte no pecunyal peyn
For smale tythes and smale offrynge
He made the people ful pytously to synge
For or the bisshop caught them with his hoke
They were in the archedekyns boke
And than hadde he through his iurisdictioun
Power of them to do ful correctioun
He hadde a sompnoure redy to his honde
A slyghter boy was none in Englonde
For sotelly he hadde his espyayle
That taught him where he myght auayle
He coude spare of lechoures one or two
To teche him to foure and twenty moo
For though the sompnoure wode were as any hare
To telle his harlottrye I wol nat spare
For we be oute of his correccioun
They haue of vs no Jurisdictioun
Ne neuir shalle terme of alle their lyues
Peyr so be women of the styuys
Quod the sompnoure, put oute of oure cure

Peas with myschaunce and with my sauenture
Sayde oure hoost and let him telle his tale
Now telle forth though the Sompnoure gale
Ne spareth nat myn owne mayster dere
This fals theef this sompnoure quod the frere
Had alwey bawdes redy to his honde
As any hawke is to the lure in Engelonde
That tolde him alle the secre that they knewe
For their acqueyntaunce was nat come of newe
They were al his approuers pryuely
He tolde him self a grete profet therby
His mayster knewe nat alwey what he wan
Withouten mandementes a leude man
He coude sompne on peyne of cristes curse
And they were glade for to fylle his purse
And make him grete festes at the nale
And right as Judas had purses smale
And was a theef right suche a theef was he
His mayster hath but half his duete
He was if I shal yeue him his laude
A theef a Sompnoure and eke a baude
He hadde eke wenches at his retenue
That whether sir Robert or sir Hue
Or Jacke or Rauf or who so that it were
That ley by them they tolde him in his ere
Thus were the wenchys and he of one assent
And he wolde fet a feyned maundment
And sompne them to the chaptre bothe two
And pele the man and let the wenche go
Than wolde he say frende I shal for thy sake
Do stryke the oute of oure lettres blake
The ther nomore as in this caas trauayle
I am thy frende there I may the auayle

Certayn he knewe of brybours many mo
Than possible is to telle in yeres two
For in this worlde nys dogge for the bowe
That can an hurte dere from an hole knowe
Bettre than this Sompnoure knewe a slygh lychour
Of auoutrez or elles any paramoure
And for that was the frute of alle his rent
Therfore on it he sette alle his entent
And so befyl that onys upon a day
This sompnoure was euir waytyng his pray
For to sompne an olde wyf a rebybe
Feynyng a cause for he wolde haue a bribe
It happed that he sawe bifore him ryde
A gay yeman undre a forest syde
A bowe he bare and arowes brigght and kene
He hadde upon him a courtpye of grene
An hat upon his hede with strenges blake
Sir quod the sompnoure hayle and wele y take
Welcome quod he and euery gode felaw
Whydre rydest thou undre this grene wode shaw
Saide this yoman wylt thou ferre to day
This sompnoure aunswerde and sayde nay
Here fast by quod he is myn entent
To ryden for to ryse up al the rent
That longith now to my lordes duete
Art thou than a bailie. ye quod he
He ne durst for belony and shame
Say that he was a sompnoure for the name
Depardeuy quod this yeman dere brother
Thou art a bailie and I am a nother
I am unknowen now in this countre
Of thyn acqueyntaunce than I pray the
And ele of brederhode if that thou lyst

Jhaue golde and ſylueꝛ in my chyſt
Jf that the happith to come in oure ſhyre
al ſhalbe thyn right as thou wylt deſire
Gramercy quod this Sompnoure by my feyth
Eueriche in otheꝛs honde his trouthe he leyth
foꝛ to be ſwoꝛne bretheꝛn tyl they dey
In daliaunce they ryde foꝛth and pley
This Sompnoure whiche was ful of Jangelis
as ful of venym been theſe berzy anglis
And euir enquirynꝫ vpon euery thinꝫ
Brotheꝛ quod he where is nowe youre duellynꝫ
Anotheꝛ day if that J ſhal you ſeche
This yoman him aunſwerde with ſoft ſpeche
Brotheꝛ quod he feꝛ in the noꝛth countre
Where as J hope ſomtyme J ſhal the ſe
Oꝛ we departe J ſhal the ſo wele wys
That of my houſe ne ſhalt thou neuir mys
Now brotheꝛ quod this Sompnoure J you pray
Theche me whiles we ryde by the way
Sithen that ye be a bailiy and ſo am J
Some ſubtelte and teꝛith me feithfully
In myn office how J may mooſt wynne
And ſparith nat foꝛ conſcience ne ſynne
But deꝛe brotheꝛ telle me how do ye
Now by my trouthe deꝛe brotheꝛ ſayde he
as J ſhal tel the a feythful tale
My wages be ful ſtreyt and ful ſmale
My loꝛde is harde to me and daungerous
And myn office is ful labourous
And therfoꝛe by extoꝛſiouns J lyue
foꝛſoth J take alle that men wol me yeue
Algate by ſlight oꝛ by vyolence
from yere to yere J wynne alle my dyſpence

I can no bettre tel the feythfully
Now certis quod the Sompnoure so fare I
I spare nat to take god it wote
But if it be to heuy or to hote
That I may gete in counsel pryuely
No more conscience of that haue I
Nere my exterioun I myght nat lyuen
Ne of suche iapes wol I nat be shreuyn
To make ne conscience knowe I none
I shrewe the shryftefaders euerichone
Wele be we mette by god and by seynt Iame
But leue brother tel me thy name
Quod this Sompnoure in this meane while
This yeman gan a lytel for to smyle
Brother quod he wylt thou that I the telle
I am a feende my dueliynge is in helle
And here I ryde aboute my purchasynge
To wytte if men wol yeue me any thynge
To purchace is the effecte of alle my rent
Loke hou thou rydest for alle the same entent
To wynne gode thou rechest neuir how
Right so fare I for ryde wol I now
Vnto the worldes ende for a pray
A quod the Sompnoure benedicite what ye say
I wende ye hadde been a yoman truly
ye haue a mannys shappe as wele as I
Haue ye than a fyxure determynat
In helle there ye be in youre astate
Nay certaynly quod he there haue we none
But whan vs lyketh we can take vs one
Or elles make you wene we be shape
Somtyme lyke a man and somtyme lyke an ape
Or lyke an auntel can I ryde or goo

It is no wondre thyng though it be so
A bousye iogloure can deceyue the
And parde yet moze craft can I thay he
Why quod the sompnoure ryde ye thay oz gone
Hy sondry shappe and nat alwey in one
Foz we quod he wol bs in suche fourme make
As mooste auayle is oure prayes foz to take
What makith you to haue alle this labourе
Wil many a cause leue sir Sompnoure
Sayde this feende but al thyng hath tyme
The day is shozt and it is passed pryme
And yet ne gat I nothyng in this day
I wol intende to wynnyng if I may
And nat intende oure wyttes to declare
Foz brothez myne thy wyttes been alle to bare
To bnderstonde al though I tolde them the
But foz thou asmith why labourе we
Foz somtyme we be goddes instrumentes
And meanes to do his comaundmentes
When that him lyst bpon his creatures
In dyuerse acte and in dyuerse figures
Withoute him we haue no myght certayne
If that him lyst to stonde there ageyn
And somtyme at oure prayez haue we leue
Only the body and nat the soule to greue
Wytnes of Job whom we dyd wo
And somtyme haue we myght on both two
This is to say on soule and on body eke
And somtyme we be suffred foz to seke
Upon a man and do his soule bnrest
And nat his body and alle is foz the best
When he withstandith oure temptacioun
It is a cause of his saluacioun

Al be it that it was nat oure entent
Be sholde be sauf by goddes iugement
And somtyme we be seruaunt vnto man
As to the Archebisshop seint Dunstan
And to the appostel seraunt ehe was I
yet telle me quod the sompnoure feithfully
Make ye youre bodies in suche wyse alwey
Of elementes. the feende aunswerde nay
Somtyme we feyney and somtyme we aryse
With dede bodies in sele sondry wyse
And spehe as resonable fayre and wele
As the phytonysse dyd to samuel
And yet wol som men say it was nat he
I do no force of youre dignyte
But one thyng warne I the I wol nat lape
Thou wylt wete algates how we be shape
Thou shalt here afterwarde my brother dere
Come where it nedith nat of me to lere
For thou shalt by thyn owne experience
Conne in the chayre rude of this sentence
Bettyr than virgyle while he was on lyue
Or daunte also now let vs ryde belyue
For I wol holde company with the
Tyl it be so that thou forsake me
Nay quod the sompnoure that shal nat betyde
I am a yeman that knowen am ful wyde
My trouthe wol I holde to the as in this caas
For though were the deuyl sathanas
My trouth wol I holde to the my brother
As I am sworn and eche of vs tyl other
For to be true brother in this caas
And bothe we gone aboute oure purchaas
Take thou thy parte of that men wol the yeue

And I shalle myne thus may we bothe lyue
And if that any of vs haue moze than othez
Let him be true and parte it with his brothez
I graunte quod the deuyl by my fay
And with that worde they ryden forth the wey
And right at ayentre of a tounes ende
To whiche that Sompnoure shope him to wende
They sawe a carte that charged was with hey
Whiche that a cartez droue forth in the wey
Deep was the wey for whiche the carte stode
This cartez smote and cryde as he were wode
What hey t Broh hey t scot spare ye for the stones
The feende quod he you fecche body and bones
As ferforth as euir ye were y foled
So mothe wo as I haue for you tholed
The deuyl haue al bothe horse carte and hey
Quod the Sompnoure here shal we haue a pley
And nere the feende he drewe as naught ne were
Ful pryuely and rownedin his ere
Herkyn my brothez herkyn by thy feyth
Heryst nat how the cartez seyth
Take it anone for he hath yeue it the
Bothe hey and carte and eke his capulles thre
Nay quod the deuyl god wote neuir a dele
It is nat his entent truste me wele
Asshe him self if that you trowest nat me
Do relles stynt a while and thou shalt se
This cartez chaked his horse on the croupe
And they began to drawe and to stoupe
Hayte now quod he that Jesu crist you bles
And alle his handy worke bothe more and les
That was wele y twyght myn owne lyerde boy
I pray god saue the and seynt loye

Now is my carte oute of the ſlouth parde
Lo brother quod the fende What tolde I the
Here may ye ſe myn owne dere brother
The chorle ſpake one thyng and thought a nother
Let vs go forth aboute oure vyage
Here wynne I nothyng vpon this carlage
Whan that they cam ſomwhat oute of the toun
This ſompnoure to his brother gan to roun
Brother quod he here wonyth an olde rebeche
That hadde almooſt as leef to leſe hir neche
As for to yeue a peny of hir gode
I wol haue twelue pens though that ſhe be wode
Or I wol ſomone hir vnto oure office
And yet god wote of hir I knowe no vice
But for thou canſt nat as in this countre
Wynne thy coſtes take here enſample of me
This ſompnoure clappd at the wydowes gate
Come oute he ſayde thou olde verry trate
I trowe thou haſt ſom preeſt or frere with the
Who knocketh ſayde this wyf benedicite
God ſaue you ſir What is youre ſwete wyl
I haue quod the ſompnoure of the a byl
Vpon peyne of curſyng loke that thou be
To morow bifore the archedeknys knee
To aunſwere to the courte of certayn thyng
Now lorde quod ſhe Jeſu criſte heuyn kyng
So wyſely helpe me as I ne may
I haue be ſeke and that ful many a day
I may nat go ſo fer quod ſhe ne ryde
But I be dede ſo prycketh in my ſyde
May I nat aſke a lybel ſir Sompnoure
And aunſwere there by my proctoure
To ſuche thyng as men wol appoſe me

yes quod the Sompnoure pay anoy let se
Twelf pens to me and I wol the quyte
I shal no profet haue therby but lyte
My master hath the profet and nat I
Come of and lete me ryde hastely
yeue me twelf pens for I may no lengere tary
Twelf pens quod she a lady seint Mary
So wysely me helpe oute of care and synne
This wyde worlde though I sholde it wynne
Ne haue I nat twelue pens within my holde
ye knowe wele that I am poure and olde
Kythe poure almes on me poure wretche
Nay than quod he the foule feende me feche
If I the excuse though thou sholde be spylt
Alas quod she god wote I am nat in the gylt
Pay me quod he or by swete seint anne
I wol anone bere awey thy newe pan
for dette whiche thou owest me of olde
whan that thou madest thyn husbonde cokeolde
I payde at home for thy correccioun
Thou lyest quod she by my saluacioun
Ne was I neuir or now wydowe ne wyf
Somned vnto youre court in alle my lyf
Ne neuir I was but of my body true
Vnto the deuyl blake and rough of hewe
yeue I thy body and eke myn panne also
And whan the deuyl herde her curse so
Upon her knees she sayde in this manere
Now mabyl myn owne modre dere
Is this poure wyl in ernyst as ye sey
The deuyl quod she fetche him or he dey
And panne and al bu the wol him repent
Nay olde stot that is nat myn entent

Quod the ſompnoure for to repent me
For any thyng that I haue hadde of the
I wolde I hadde thy ſmoke and euery cloth
Now brother quod the deuyl be nat wrothe
Thy body and this panne is myn by right
Thou ſhalt to helle with me yet to nyght
Where thou ſhalt knowe of oure pryuite
More than a mayſter of diuinyte
And with that worde the foule feende him hent
Body and ſoule he with the deuyl went
Where that theſe ſompnoures haue their heritage
And god that made after his ymage
Mankynd. ſaue and gyde vs alle and ſome
And leue that ſompnoures gode men become
For dyuerſe artes I coude telle you quod the frere
Hadde I had leue for the ſompnoure here
After the texte of criſt poule and John
And of oure othere doctoures many one
Suche peynes as poure hertes myght agryſe
Al be it ſo that no tunge may deuyſe
Though that I myght a thouſand wyntes tel
The peynes of that curſyd houſe of helle
But for to kepe vs fro that curſed place
Waketh and prayeth Jeſu of his grace
So kepe vs fro the temptoure Sathanas
Herkneth this worde be ware as in this caas
The lyoun ſytteth in his wayte alwey
To ſle the innocent if that he may
Diſpoſe ye youre hertes ay to withſtonde
The feende that wol make you thral and bonde
He may nat tempte you ouer youre myght
For criſte wol be youre champyon and knyght
And pray the ſompnoure him repent

Of his myſdedys or that the deuyl him hent

Here endith the freres tale
And begynneth the Sompnoures prologe

THis ſompnoure in his ſterop high ſtode
Upon this freze his hert was ſo wode
That lyke an aſpen leef he quoke for ire
Lordynges quod he one thyng I deſire
I you beſeche of youre curteſye
Sithen ye haue herde this falſe freze lye
As ſuffreth me I may my tale tel
This frere boſtith that he knowith hel
And god wote that is lytel wondre
frezes and feendes been ful lytel a ſondre
For parde ye haue herde ofte tyme tel
How that a freze rauyſſhed was to helle
In ſpiryte onys by a viſioun
And as an aungel led him by and doun
To ſhewe him the tormentes that were there
In al the place ne ſawe he nat a freze
Of other folke he ſawe ynough in wo
Unto the aungel ſpake this freze tho
Now ſir quod he haue frezes ſuche a grace
That none of them ſhal come in this place
yes quod the aungel many a myllioun
And vnto ſathanas he ledde him doun
And now hath ſathanas ſuche a tayle
Broder than a Carrike is the ſayle
Holde by thy tayle thou ſathanae quod he
Shewe forth thyn ers and let the freze ſe
Where is the nest of frezes in this place
And or that a furlong were of ſpace

The ſompnoures prologue

And right ſo as bees ſwarme oute of an hyue
Oute of the deuylles ers they gan dryue
Twenty thouſand frezes on a route
And throughe oute helle ſwarmyd alle a boute
And cam agayn as faſte as they may gone
And into his ers they crepte euerichone
He clypped ageyn his tayle and lay ſtyl
This freze whan he lohed had his fyl
Wyth the tormentes of this ſory place
His ſpyrite god reſtored of his grace
Vnto his body agayn and he awoke
But natheles for fere yet he quoke
So was the deuylles ers ay in his mynde
That is to his herytage of derke hynde
God ſaue you al ſaue this curſed freze
My prologue wol I ende in this manere

Here endith the ſompnoures prologue



Here begynneth the Sompnoures tale

1 Wrdynges ther is in yorke shyre as I gesse
A mersshe countre that called is holderneſſe
In whiche ther went a lymytoure aboute
To preche. and eke to begge it is no doute
And so befyl that on a day this freze
Hadde prechyd in a chirche in his manere
And specially aboue euery thyng
Excited he the people in his prechyng
To trentalles and to yeue for goddes sake
Wherwith men myght holy houses make
There as dyuyne seruice is honoured
Nat there it is wasted and deuoured
Ne there it nedith nat to be yeuen
As to possessioners that may lyuen
Thankyd be god in wele and habundaunce
Trentales sayd he delyuereyn from penaunce
Their frendes soules as wele olde as yong
ye whan they be hastely y song
Nat for to holde a freest ioly and gay
He syngith nat but one masse on a day
Delyuereth oute anon quod he the soules
Ful harde it is with hasshoke and oules
To be yclawed or to brenne or bake
Now spede you hastely for cristes sake
And whan this freze had sayde al his entent
With qui cum patre forth his wey he went
Whan folke in the chirche had yeue what them lest
He went his way no lengere wolde he rest
With scrippe and typped staf y tucked hye
In euery house he gan to poure and prye
And beggyd mele and chese or elles corn

His fela we had a staf y typped with horn
A peyre of tables of clene yuory
And a poyntely polisshed fetously
And wrote the names alwey as he stode
Of al the folke that yaue them any gode
A shaunce that he wolde for them pray
yeue vs a busshel whete malt or rey
A goddes hyrtel or a cryppe of chese
Or elles what you lyst I may nat chese
A goddes half peny or a masse peny
Or yeue vs of youre braune if ye haue any
A dagon of youre blanket leue dame
Oure sustre dere lo here I wryte youre name
Bacon or beef or suche thyng as ye fynde
A sturdy harlot went them ay behynde
That was theire hors and euir he bare a sacke
And what men yaue him leyde it on his backe
And whan he was oute at the doze anon
He playned alwey the names euerichon
That he biforn hadde wrytte in his tables
He serued them with nyses and with fables
Nay there thoulyest sompnoure quod the freze
Pease quod oure hoost for cristes mother dere
Tel forth thy tale and spare it nat at alle
So thryue I quod the sompnoure so I shal
So long he went from house to house that he
Cam to an house there he was wont to be
Refresshyd more than in an hundreth places
Sek lay the gode man whos the place is
Bedred vpon a couche lowe he lay
Deus hic quod he o thomas gode day
Sayde this freze curteisly and softe
Thomas quod he god yelde you ful ofte

Jhaue on this benche y fare ful wele
Here haue J etyn many a mery mele
And fro the benche he droue a wey the cat
And leyde a doun his potent and his hat
And eke his scrip and set him soft a doun
His felawe was go walwen in to the toun
Forth with his knaue in to that hostery
Where as he shope him that nyght tolye
O dere maystez sayde this seke man
How haue ye farey sithen Marche began
J sawe nat you this fourtnyght ne moze
God wote quod he laboured haue J ful soze
And specially foz thy saluacioun
Haue J sayde many a precious orisoun
And foz oure othez frendes god them blesse
Jhaue this day been at youre chirche at messe
And sayde a sermon to my lewde wytte
Nat aftez the pleyn teyte of holy wrytte
Foz it is herde to you as J suppose
And therfoze tel J you alle the glose
Glosyng is a ful glorious thyng certayn
Foz lettre sleeth as we clerkes sayn
There haue J taught them to be cheritable
And spende their gode there it is resonable
And there J sawe oure dame where is she
yondre in the yezde J trowe that she be
Sayde this man and she wol come anon
A maystez welcome be ye by seint John
Sayde this wyf. how fare ye hertely
This frezе aryseth by ful curtesly
And her enbraseth in his armes narowe
And kyssith hez swete and chirkyth as a sparowe
With his lippes. dame quod he right wele

As he that is youre ſeruaunt euery dele
Thanked be god that yaue you ſoule and lyf
yet ſawe I nat to day ſo fayre a wyf
In alle the chirche ſo god ſaue me
ye god amende the fautes ſir quod ſhe
Algates welcome ye be by my fey
Gramercy dame that haue I founde alwey
But of youre grete goodnes by youre leue
I wolde pray you that ye you nat greue
I wyl with Thomas ſpeke a lytel throwe
Theſe curatoures beeyn ful negligent and ſlow
To gropen tenderly a mannys conſcience
In ſhryfte and in prechyng is my dilygence
And ſtudye on petyrs wordes and poules
I walke and fyſſhe criſteyn mennys ſoules
To yelde Jeſus criſte his propre rent
To ſprede his wordes is alle myn entent
Now by youre leue dere ſir quod ſhe
Chydeth him wele for ſeint charite
Be is ay angry as is a pyſmyre
Though that he haue al that he can deſyre
Though I him wrye and make him warm
And ouir him ley my leg and myn arme
He gronethe lyke oure boore lyth in oure ſty
Ther diſporte of him right none haue I
I may nat pleaſe him in no maner caas
O Thomas ie bous dy thomas thomas
This maketh the feende this muſt be amended
Ire is a thyng that higth god offended
And therfore wol I ſpeke a worde or two
Now mayſter quod the wyf or that I go
What wyl ye dame I wyl go ther aboute
Now dame quod he ie bous dy ſauns doute

Haue I naught of a capon but the lyuer
And of youre White brede but a shyuer
And after that a rosted pygges hede
But I ne Wolde for me that no best Were dede
Than hadde I With you hoolly suffisaunce
I am a man of lytel sustenaunce
My spyrite hath his offrynge in the byble
My body is ay so redy and so pynchle
To Wake that my body is ful distroyed
I pray you dame that ye be nat annoyed
Thoughe I you my counseyl frendly shewe
By god I nolde haue tolde it but a fewe
And sir quod she one Worde or I go
My chylde is dede Within these Wokes two
Sone after that ye Went oute of this toun
His deth sawe I by reuelacioun
Sayde this freze at home in oure dortoure
I dar Wele say that Within half an oure
After his deth I sawe him boze to blys
In my bisyoun so god my soule wys
So dyd oure Seyten and oure fermerer
That haue be true frezes this fyfty yere
They may nowe god be thanked of his lone
Whan their Jubile and Walkyn al allone
And bp I rose dnd alle oure couent ehe
With many a tere trykkynge on oure cheke
Withouten noyse and clateryng of belles
Te deum Was oure song and nothyng elles
Sone after to criste I bad an holy orysoun
Thankynge him of my gode reuelacioun
For sir and dame trustith me right Wele
Oure orysouns been moze effectuel
And moze We se of cristes secrat thynges

Thay lozel people al be they lynges
We lyue in pouerte and in abstynence
And lozel folke in riches and dispence
Of mete and drynke and in foule delyte
We haue the worldes lust al in despyte
Lazar and diues lyuedey ful dyuersly
And dyuerse guerdone hadde they therby
Who so wol pray must faste and be clene
And fatte his soule and make his body lene
We fare as sayth thappostel cloth and fode
Suffiseth vs though they be nat ful goode
The clennesse and the fastyng of vs frezes
Maketh that criste exceptith oure prayers
Lo moyses fourty daies and fourty nyght
Fastyd oz that god ful of his myght
Spake with him in the mount synay
With empty wombe fastyng many a day
There resceyued he the lawe that was wryten
With goddes fynger. and holy wele ye wetyn
In the mount Oreb oz he hadde any speche
With higth god that is oure lyues leche
He fastyd long and was in contemplaunce
Aron he hadde the temple in gouernaunce
And eke the other preestes euerichone
Into the temple whan they sholde gone
To praye foz the people and to do seruise
They nolde drynke in nomanez wyse
No drynke that myght them dronke make
But there in abstynence to pray and wake
Lest that they deyde take hede what I say
But they be sobre that foz the people pray
Where that I say foz it ynough suffiseth
Oure lozde Jesu as holy wrytte deuyseth

ȝaue vs en ſample of faſtyng and prayers
Therfore we mendicauntes we ſely frezes
Been weddyd to pouerte and to contynence
To charyte humbleneſſe and abſtynence
To pezſecncion for euery right wyſneſſe
To weppyng myſericorde and to clennеſſe
And therfore may ye ſe that oure prayers
I ſpeke of vs mendicaunt we frezes
Be to the higħ god moze eyceptable
Than youres with youre feeſtes at youre table
Fro paradiſe firſt if I ſhal nat lyȝe
Was may oute chaſyd for his gloton̄y
And chaſt was may in paradiſe certayne
But herken now Thomas what I ſhalle ſayn
I haue no text of it as I ſuppoſe
But I fynde a manez thyng of a gloſe
That ſpecially oure ſwete lorde Jeſus
Spake this by frezes whan he ſayde thus
Bleſſed be they that poure in ſpyryte been
And ſo forth alle the goſpel may ye ſeen
Whether it be lyker to oure profeſſioun
Or heyres that ſwymme in poſſeſſioun
Fy on their pompe and theire glotony
And of theire lewdnes I them deffye
Me thynke they be lyke Jomman
Fat as a whale and walke lyke a ſwan
Al bynolente as a bottel in the ſpence
Theire prayer is of ful lytel reuerence
Whan they for ſoules ſay the pſalme of dauid
Lo but they ſey cor meum eructauit
Who folowith criſtes goſpel and his fore
But we that humble be chaſte and poure
Workers of goddes wordes and nat auditoures

Therfore right as any hauke vpon his cours
Vp spryngith in the ayer right so prayers
Of cheritable and chaste besy freres
Makyn them sours to goddes eris two
Thomas thomas so moot I ryde or go
And by that lorde that clepyd was seynt Iue
Ne thou our brother were sholdest thou nat thryue
For in oure chapitre praye we day and nyght
To criste to sende the bothe helth and myght
Thy body for to welden ful hastely
God wote quod he therof no thyng fele I
As helpe me god as in fewe yeres
Haue I spended on many dyuerse freres
Ful many a pounde yet fare I neuir the bet
Certayn my gode haue I almoost besette
Fare wele my golde for it is alle ago
The frere aunswerde o thomas dost thou so
What nedith the dyuers freres for to seche
What nedith him that hath a parfyte leche
To sechen othere leches in the toun
youre inconstaunce is youre confusioun
Holde ye than me and ete al oure couent
To pray for you be nat sufficicient
Thomas that iape is nat worth a myte
youre malady is for we haue tolyte
A yeue that couent foure and twenty grotes
And yeue that couent half a quarter otes
And yeue that frere a peny and lete him go
Nay nay Thomas it may nothyng be so
What is a ferthyng worth parted on twelue
Lo eche thyng that is onyd in them selue
Is more stronge than whan it is shatred
Thomas of me thou shalt nat be flatred

Thou woldest haue oure laboure al for nought
The high god that al this worlde hath wrought
Sayth that the workman is worthy his hire
Thomas of youre tresoure nought wol I desire
As for my self but that al oure couent
To pray for you be ay so diligent
And for to holde vp cristes owyn chirche
Thomas if ye wol lerne for to wyrche
Of byldyng vpon chirches may ye fynde
If it be gode in Thomas lyf of ynde
pe lye here ful of angre and of ire
With wiche the deuyl set youre herte on fyre
And chyden here this holy innocent
youre wif that is here so meke and pacient
And therfore thomas trowe me if thou lyst
Ne stryue nat with thy wyf as for the best
And here this worde a wey now by thy fayth
Touchyng suche thyng to what the wyse sayth
Within thy house ne be thou no lyoun
To thy subgettes do thou noon oppressioun
Ne make thyn acquentaunce nat to fle
And thomas yet eft sones warne I the
Beware of her that in thy bosom slepith
Ware fro the serpent that so slely crepith
Vndre the grasse and styngith ful subtelly
Beware my sonne and herkyn pacientely
That twenty thousand men haue lost their lyues
For stryuyng with their lemmannys & their wyues
Now sithen ye haue so holy a meke wyf
What nedith you thomas to make stryf
Ther nys I wys no serpent so cruelle
When a man treddith vpon his tayle ne half so fel
As a woman is when she hath caught ayre

Verry vengeaunce is thay al her desire
Ire is a synne one of the grete of seuyn
And ful abhomynable to the kyng of heuyn
And to hym selue it is a distruction
This euery lewde vycar or parsoun
Can say how ire engendreth homycide
Ire in soth the executoure is of pryde
I coude of ire say right moche sorowe
That my tale sholde last tyl the morowe
And therfore pray I god bothe day and nyght
That to an irous man god sende lytel right
It is grete harm and certis grete pyte
To set an irous man in high degree
Whilom ther was an irous potestate
As sayth seneke. that duryng his astate
Upon a day oute ryden knyghtes two
And as fortune wolde that it was so
That one of them cam home that other nought
Anone the knyght afore the iuge is brought
That sayde thus thou hast thy felowe slayne
For whiche I deme the to deth certayne
And to a nother knyght comaunded he
Sholde him to the deth I charge the
And happyd as they went by the wey
Towarde the place where he sholde dey
The knyght cam whiche men wende had be dede
Than thought they it were the best rede
To lede them bothe to the iuge agayn
They sayde lorde the knyght is nat slayn
His felawe here he stont hole a lyue
ye shal be dede quod he so moot I thryue
This is to sey bothe on two and thre
And to the first knyght right thus spake he

Jdampned the thou muſt algates be dede
And thou alſo muſt nedes leſe thyn hede
For thou art cauſe why thy fela we dyeth
And to the thridde knyght right thus he ſeyth
Thou haſt nat do that J comaunded the
And thus he dyd do them ſle al thre
Rus Cambyſes was ehe dronkelew
And ay delyted him to be a ſhrewe
And ſo befyl a lorde of his menye
That louyd wele vertuous moralyte
Sayd on a day bitwixt hem ſelf right thus
A lorde is loſt if he be ought vicious
There is many an eye and many an ere
Awaytyng on a lorde he wote nat where
And dronkenneſſe is ehe a foule record
Of any man and namely of a lorde
For goddes loue drynkith more temperatly
Wyne makith a man to leſen wrechedly
His mynde and ehe his lymmes euerichone
The reuerſe ſhalt thou ſe quod he anone
And preue it by thyn owne experience
That wyne ne doth to folke ſuche offence
Ther is no wyne bereuyth me my myght
Of honde of fote ne of myn eyen ſight
And for deſpyte he dranke moche the more
An hundreth part than he dyd bifore
And right anone this prous curſed wreche
This knyghtes ſonne leet bifore him fetche
Comaunded him he ſholde bifore him ſtonde
And ſodenly he tokе his bowe in honde
And bi the ſtryng he pulled to his ere
And with an arowe he ſlough the childe there
Now whither haue J a ſykеr honde or none

Quod he is al my myght and my mynde agone
Hath wyne bereuyd me myn eyen sight
What sholde I telle the aunswere of the knyght
His sone was sleyn ther is no more to say
Be ware therfore with lordes for to ley
Synyeth placebo and I shalle if I can
But if it be vnto a poure man
To a poure man men sholde his vyces telle
But nat to a lorde though he sholde go to helle
O Jrus Cyrus that ilke percien
How distroyed he the ryuer of gysen
For that an horse of his was dreynt therin
Whan that he went babilon for to wynne
He made that the ryuer was so smal
That men myght ryde or wade ouir al
Lo what sayd he that so wele teche can
Ne be no felawe to no angrous man
Ne with no wode man walke by the wey
Lest thou repente I wol no ferther sey
Now thomas leef brother leue thyn ire
Thou shalt me fynde as iuste as a squire
Holde nat the deuylles knyf ay in thyn herte
Thyn angre doth the al to sore smert
But shewe to me alle thy confession
Nay quod the sehe man by seint Symon
I haue be shryue this day of my curate
I haue him tolde al hooly myn estate
It nedith nomore to spehe of it sayde he
But if it lyst of myn humylite
yeue me than of thy gode to make oure cloyster
Sayd he for many a mushle and many an oyster
Whan other men haue been ful wele at ease
Haue been oure food oure cloyster for to reyse

And yet god wote vnneth oure fundament
Parfourmed is ne of oure chirche ful pauement
Ther is nat a tyle within oure wonys
By god we owe fyfty pounde for stones
Now helpe thomas for him that harowed helle
Or elles must we oure bokes selle
And if men lacke oure predicacioun
Than goth the worlde al to distruccioun
For who so wol fro this worlde vs bereue
So god me saue thomas by youre leue
He wolde bereue oute of this worlde the sonne
For who can teche and worke as we konne
And that is nat of lytel tyme quod he
But sithen Helyn was or helyse
Haue freres be that fynde I of recorde
In charite y thanked be oure lorde
Now thomas helpe for seynt charite
And doun anone he sitteth on his knee
This sely man wexyt nygh wode for ire
He wolde that the frere had be a fyre
With his false dissymulacioun
Suche thynges as been in my profession
Quod he that may I preue and none other
Ye say me thus how that I am youre brother
Ye certis quod the frere trustith me right wele
I toke oure dame oure lettre and our sele
Now wele quod he and somwhat shal I yeue
Vnto youre holy couent while I leue
And in thy honde thou shalt it haue anone
On this condicion and other none
That thou departe it so my dere brother
That euery frere haue asmoche as other
This shalt thou swere on thy profession

Withoute fraude or cauillacioun
Yf swere it quod the freze vpon my feyth
And therwith al his honde in his he leyth
Lo here my feyth in me shalbe no lache
Than put thy hond adoun right by my bache
Sayde this man and grope wele behynde
Byneth my buttoke there shalt thou fynde
A thyng that I haue hydde in pryuyte
A thought this freze that shal go with me
And doun his honde he launcheth to the clyft
In hope for to fynde there som gode yeft
And whan this seke man felt this freze
Aboute his towel groppyng here and there
Amyd his honde he let the freze a farte
Ther is no capul drawyng in a carte
That myght haue let a farte of suche a soun
The freze vp stert as doth a wode lyoun
A fals chorle quod he for cockes bones
This hast thou in despyte do for the nonys
Thou shalt abye this fart if that I may
His meny with that herde suche array
Come leppyng in and chased oute the freze
And forth he goth with a ful heuy chere
And fet his felawe there as lay his store
He loked as he were a wylde bore
And gryndeth with the tethe so was he wrothe
A sturdy paas doun to the courte he goth
Where as there woned a man of grete honoure
To whome that he was alwey confessoure
This worthy man was lorde of that village
This freze cam as he were in a rage
Where as this lorde sat etyng at the borde
Vnneth myght the freze spehe one worde

Tyl at the last he sayde god you se
This lorde gan lowe and sayd benedicite
What frere Iohn what maner worlde is this
I se wele sothe thynge ther is a mys
ye lowe as though the wode were ful of theuys
Syt doun and tel me what youre greue is
And it shal be amended if that I may
I haue quod he had a despyte to day
God yelde it you a doun in youre byllage
That in this worlde ther nys so poure a page
That he nolde haue abhominacioun
Of that I haue rescepued in the toun
And yet me greuyth me nothynge so sore
As that the olde churle with lockes hore
Blasphemyd hath oure holy couent ehe
Now mayster quod the lorde I you beseche
No mayster sir quod he but seruytoure
Though I haue had in scole that honoure
God lyketh nat that raby my be calle
Nother in market me in other large halle
No force quod he but tel me al youre greef
Sir quod this frere an odious myschief
This day betydde is to myn ordre and me
And so per consequens in eche degre
Of holy chirche god amend it sone
Sir quod the lorde we wote what is to done
Distempere you nat ye be my confessoure
ye be the salt of the erthe and the sauoure
For goddes loue your pacience now holde
Tel me youre greef. and he anone him tolde
As ye haue herde bifory ye wote wele what
The lady of the house ay stylle sat
Tyl she had herde what the frere had sayde

By goddes modre quod she this blissed mayde
Is ther ought elles tel me feythfully
Madame quod he how thynke ye therby
How that me thynketh quod she so god me spede
I say a chorle hath do a chorles dede
What sholde I say godlet him neuir the
His sely hede is full of banyte
I holde him in a maner of a fransye
Madame quod he by god I shal nat lye
But I in any wyse may on him awrehe
I shal diffame him ouir alle where I spehe
That fals blasphemoure whiche that charged me
To parte it that wol nat departed be
To euery lyke moche with myschaunce
The lorde sat stylle as he were in a traunce
And in his herte he rolled up and doun
How that this chorle hath ymaginacioun
To shewe suche a probleme to the frere
Neuir erst or now herde I of suche a matere
I trowe the deuyl put it in his mynde
In arsmetryke shal ther no man fynde
Bifore this day of suche a questioun
Who sholde make a demonstracioun
That euery man sholde haue lyke his parte
As of a soun or of sauoure of a farte
O nyce proude chorle I shrewe his face
Lo sires quod the lorde with harde grace
Who euir herde of suche a thyng or now
To euery man lyke tel me how
This is an impossible it may nat be
Ey nyce chorle godlet him neuir the
The rombleyng of a farte and euery soun
Nys but of the ayer reuerberacioun

And euir it Wastythlyte and lyte awey
Thez is noman can deme by my fey
ȝf that it Were departed equally
What lo my chozle lo yet how shrewdly
Vnto my confessoure to day he spake
ȝholde him certayn a demonyache
Now ete youre mete and let the chozle go pley
Let him go hang him self a deuyl wey
Now stode the lozdes squyez at his bozde
That carued his mete and herde Worde by worde
Of alle this thyng of Whiche ȝ haue you sayde
My lozde quod he be ye nat euyl appayed
Foz ȝ coude telle foz a gowne clothe
To you sir freze so ye be nat wrothe
How that this fart sholde euyn delyd be
Among youz couent if it lyke sy thee
Tel quod the lozde and thou shalt haue anone
A gown clothe by god and by seint John
My lozde quod he Whan that the Wedyz is fayre
Without Wynde oz perturbyng of ayez
Let bryng a carte Whele right into this halle
But so that it haue the spokes al
Twelf spokes hath a carte Whele comonly
And bryng me than twelue frezes woot ye Why
Foz thertene is a couent as ȝ gesse
youre confessoure heze foz his Worthynesse
Shal parfouzme by the nombre of his couent
Than shal they knele doun by one assent
And to euery spokes ende in this manere
Ful sadly lay his nose shal a freze
youre noble confessouz thez god him saue
Shal holde his nose vpright vndre the naue
Than shal this chozle With bely styf and tought

As any taboure hyder be y brought
And set him on the whele right of this carte
Vpon the naue and make him let a farte
And ye shal se vpon perpl of my lyf
By preef whiche that is demonstratyf
That equally the sounde if it wol wende
And eke the stynke oute of the spokes ende
Saue that this worthy man your confessoure
Bicause he is a man of grete honoure
Shal haue the first fruyte as reason is
The noble vsage of freres yet is this
The worthyest man of them shal first be serued
And certaynly he hath it wele deserued
He hath to day taught vs so moche gode
With prechyng in the pulpet there he stode
That I may vouchesauf I say for me
He hadde the first smelle of fartes thre
And so wolde al his brethern hardely
He berith him so fayre and so holyly
The lord the lady and eche man saue the frere
Sayd that Jankyn spake in this matere
As wele as Ouyd or protholome
Touchyng the chorles they sayd subtelte
And high wyt made him speke as he spake
He nys no fool ne no demonyake
And Jankyn hath y wonne a newe goun
My tale is doon We be almost at the toun

Here endith the Sompnoures tale
And here folowith the prologue of the
Clerke of Oxenforde

Syr clerke of Dyenforde oure hoost sayde
ye ryde as quoy and styl as doth a mayde
Were new spoused sythyng at the borde
This day ne herde I of youre tonge a worde
I trow ye studye aboute som sophyme
But Salamon sayde that al thyng hath tyme
For goddes sake as be of gode chere
It is no tyme now to studye here
Tel vs some mery tale by youre fey
For what man is entred in to a pley
He nedes moot in to the pley assent
But precith nat as frezes do in lent
To make vs for oure olde synnes wepe
Ne that thy tale make vs nat to slepe
Tel vs som mery thyng of auentures
youre termes youre colloures and youre figures
Kepe them in store tyl so be that ye endyte
Right style as when men to kynges wryte
Speke so playn at this tyme I you pray
That we may vnderstonde what ye say
This worthy clerke benygnely answerd
Ost quod he I am youre verde
ye haue as now of vs the gouernaunce
And therfore I shal do you obeysaunce
As fer as reason axith hardely
I wol you tel a tale whiche that I
Lernyd at padowe of a worthy clerke
As preuyd is by his wordes and his werke
He is now dede and nayled in the cheste
I pray to god yeue his soule gode rest
Fraunceys petrarke the laureat poete
Hight this clerke whose rethorike swete
Enlumyned al ytayle of poetrye

As lyuyan dyd of philosophye
Or la we or other arte particulere
But deth that wol nat suffre vs duelle here
But as it were the tWynkleyn of an eye
Them bothe hath slayne al shal we dye
But forth to tel of this worthy man
That taught me this tale as I began
I say that first With high style he enditeth
Or he the body of his tale Writeth
A proheme in Whiche discryueth he
Pe mounte and of saluces the countre
And speketh of apertyn the hilles hye
That been the boundes of West lumbardye
And of mount vesulus in specialle
Where that the po oute of the Wel smalle
Taketh his first sprynglynge and his sours
That estward euir encreseth in his cours
To emely Warde to ferrer and benyse
The Whiche a long thyng were to deuyse
And truly as to my iugement
Me thynketh it a long impertynent
Saue that him lyst conueye his matere
But this is his tale as ye may here

Here endith the prologue of the
Clerke of Oxenforde
And here begynneth his tale



t Here is in the weſt ſyde of Itayle
Doun at the rute of veſulus the colde
A luſty playn habundannt of vytayle
Where many a toun and toure thou mayſt beholde
That founded were in tyme of faders olde
And many a nother delytable ſight
And ſaluces this noble countre hight
A Markes ſomtyme lord was of that londe
As were his worthy eldres him bifore
And obeyſaunt ay redy to his honde
Were alle his lieges bothe laſſe and more
Thus in delyte he lyued and hath doo yore
Beloued and dradde through fauour of fortune
Bothe of his lordes and eke of his comune
Therwith he was to ſpeke of lynage
The gentylleſt y born of lumbardy
A fayre parſon a ſtrong and yong of age
And ful of honoure and of curteſye

Discrete ynough his countre for to gy
Saue in som thynges that he was to blame
And Walter was this yong lordes name
I blame him thus that he considred nat
In tyme comyng What myght him betyde
But on his lust present was al his thought
As for to hauke and hunte on euery syde
Wele nygh alle other cures lete he slyde
And eke he nolde and that was worst of al
Wedde no wyf for ought that myght befalle
Only that poynte his people bare so sore
That flok mele on a day they to him went
And one of them that wysest was of lore
Or elles that the lorde wolde best assent
That he sholde tel him What his people ment
Or elles coude he shewe wele suche matere
He to the marques sayd as ye shal here
O noble marques your humanyte
Assureth vs and yeueth vs hardynesse
As ofte as tyme is of necessite
That we to you may telle oure heuynesse
Acceptith now lord of your gentylnes
That we With pytous hert vnto you pleyn
And let you erys nat my boyce disdeyn
Al haue I nat to done in this matere
More than a nother man hath in this place
yet for asmoche as ye my lorde so dere
Haue alwey shewed me fauour and grace
I dar the bettre ashe of you a space
Of audience to shewe oure request
And ye my lord to do right as you lest
For certis lord so wele vs lyketh you
And al youre werke and euir haue doon that we

Ne coude nat oure self deuyse how
We myght lyue in more felicite
Saue one thyng lorde if youre wyl be
That for to be a wedded man you lest
Than were youre people in souerayne hertes rest
Bowe ye youre hede vndre the blissful yok
Of soueraynte and nat of seruyse
Whiche that men clepith spousayle or wedlok
And thynkith lorde among youre wyttes wyse
How that oure daies passe in sondry wyse
For though we slepe or wake rynne or ryde
Ay flyeth the tyme it wol no man abyde
And though youre grene youthe floure as yet
Ynempith age as stylle as any stone
And deth manasseth euery age and smyte
In eche estate for there eschapith none
And also certayn as we knowe echone
That we shal dye and vncertayn we alle
Been of the day whan deth shal on vs falle
Accepith than of vs the true entent
That yet neuir refused eny youre heste
And we wol lorde if ye wol assent
Chese you a wyf in short tyme at the lest
Born of the gentylleste and of the mest
Of al ytalie so that it ought seme
Honoure to god and you as I can deme
Delyuer vs oute of alle this besy drede
And take a wyf for high goddes sake
For if so be it befalle as god forbede
That through youre deth youre lyne shulde slake
And that a straunge successoure shulde take
youre heritage o wo were vs on lyue
Wherfore we pray you hastely to wyue

Her mekē prayer and her pytous chere
Made the marques herte for to haue pyte
ye wol quod he myn owne people dere
To that I neuir erst thought constreyne me
I me reioised of my lyberte
That seldeyn tyme is founde in mariage
There I was fre I must be in seruage
But natheleſſe I ſe youre true entent
And truſte vpon youre wytte and haue done ay
Wherfore of my fre wyl I wol assent
To wedde me as ſone as euir I may
But there as ye haue profered me to day
To chese me a wyf I you relece
That chose I pray you of that profer ſece
For god it wote that children oft been
Vnlyke theire worthy elders them bifore
Bounte cometh al of god nat of the streen
Of whiche they be gendred and y bore
I truſte in goddes bounte and therfore
My mariage and myn astate and reſt
I him betake he may do as him lyſte
Lete me allone in chesyng of my wyf
That charge vpon my bake I wyl endure
But I you pray and charge vpon your lyf
That what wyf I take ye may assure
To worſhippe her whiles her lyf may dure
In worde in werke both here and euery where
As ſhe an emperours doughter were
And ferthermore this ſhal ye ſwere that ye
Ayenſt my chose ſhal neuir grutche ne ſtryue
For ſithen I ſhal forgo my lyberte
At youre requeſt as euir moot I thryue
There as my herte is ſette there wol I wyue

And but ye wol assent in suche manere
I pray you spekith nomore of this matere
With herty wyl they sweryn and assentyn
To alle this thyng there sayd nat one wight nay
Besechyng him of grace or that that they wentyn
That he wolde graunte them a certayn day
Of his spousayle as sone as euir he may
For yet alwey many of the people dredde
Lest the marques wolde no wyf wedde
He graunted them a day suche as them lest
On whiche he wolde be weddyd sikerly
And sayde he dyd al this at theire request
And they with humble entent buxomly
Knelyng upon theire knees ful reuerently
Him thanked alle and thus they haue an ende
Of theire entent and home agayn they wende
And herupon he tolde his officers
And comaunded for the fest for to puruey
And to his pryuy knyghtes amd squyers
Suche charge yaue as he lyst on them ley
And they to his comaundment obeye
And eche of them doth al his diligence
To do unto that fest higth reuerence

Prima pars Grisilidis

At fer fro that paleys honourable
There as this marques shope his mariage
There stode a thorpe of sight ful delytable
In whiche that poure folke of that vyllage
Hadde their bestes and their herbygage
And of theire laboure tolke theire sustenaunce
After that the erthe yaue them habundaunce

Among these poure folke ther dwelled a man
Whiche was yholde pourest of them alle
But high god somtyme sende can
His grace into a lytel oxes stalle
Janycola men of that throwpe him cal
A doughter hadde he fayre ynough to sight
And Grisildes this yong mayden hight
But for to speke of vertuous beaute
Than was she one the fayrest vndre sonne
And ful pouerly y fostryd vp was she
No lycorous lust was throughe her herte y ronne
But ofter of the welle than of the wyne tonne
She dranke and she wolde vertue please
She knewe wele laboure but none ydle ease
But though this mayde so tendre were of age
yet in the breest of her virginyte
There was enclosed rype and sadde corage
And in grete reuerence of charite
Her old poure fadre fostryd she
A fewe shepe spynnyng on felde she kepte
She wolde nat be ydle tyl she slepte
And whan she homwarde cam she wolde bryng
Wortys or other herbes tymes ofte
The whiche she shredde and sethith for her kynyng
And made her bedde harde and nothyng soft
And ay she kept her faders lyf on loft
With euerichone obeysaunce and diligence
That childe myght do to the faders reuerence
Upon Grisilde this poure creature
Ful oft sithys this marques set his eye
As he rode on huntyng parauenture
And whan it befyl that he myght her aspye
He nat with wanton lokyng of folye

His eyen cast on her but in sad wyse
Upon her chere he wolde him oft auyse
Commendyng in his hert her womanhede
And eke her vertue passyng any wight
Of so yong age as wele in chere as dede
For though the people had no grete insight
In vertue he considred ful right
Her bounte and disposed him that he wolde
Wedde her only if he euir wedde sholde
The day of weddyng cam but no wight can
Tel what maner woman it sholde be
For which meruayle wondred many a man
And sayd they were in prynyte
Wol nat oure lorde leue yet his vanyte
Wol he nat wedde allas allas the while
Why wol he thus him selue and vs begyle
But natheles this marques had do make
Of gemmys set in golde and in asure
Broches and rynges for grisildes sake
And of her clothyng tok the mesure
Of a mayde lyke vnto her stature
And eke of her other ornamentes alle
That vnto suche a weddyng sholde be falle
The tyme of vndryn on the same day
Approchyd that the weddyng sholde be
And al the paleys put was in aray
Bothe halle and chambre eche in his degre
Houses of office stuffed with grete plente
There mayst thou se of deynteous vytayle
That may be fonnde as fer as lastith ytale
This ryalle marques richely arrayed
Lordes and ladies in his compayny

The whiche that to the feſt were prayed
And of his retenue the bachelery
With many a ſoune of ſondry melody
Vnto the vyllage of whiche I tolde
In this array the right wey haue holde
Griſilde of this god wote ful innocent
That for her ſhapen was al this aray
To fet water at a welle is went
And cometh home as ſone as euir ſhe may
For were ſhe herde ſayd that ilke day
That the marques ſholde wedde and if ſhe myght
She wolde fayne haue ſeyn ſom of that ſight
She thought I wol with other maydeyns ſtond
That been my felawes in oure doze and ſe
The marques and therfore wyl I fonde
To doon at home as ſone as it may be
The labourе whiche that longith to me
And than I may at leyſer here beholde
If ſhe this wey vnto the caſtel holde
And as ſhe wolde ouir the threſſholde gone
The marques cam and gan her for to calle
And ſhe ſat doun her water pot anone
Beſide the threſholde in an oxes ſtalle
And doun vpon her knees ſhe gan to fal
And with ſadde countenaunce kneled ſtyl
Tyl ſhe had herde her ſoueraynes lordes wyl
This thoughtful marches ſpake vnto the mayde
Ful ſobirly and ſayd in this manere
Where is youre fadre o Griſilides he ſayde
And ſhe with reuerence and humble chere
Aunſwerde lorde he is al redy here
And in ſhe goth withouten lengere let
And to the marques ſhe her fadre fet

He by the honde than toke this olde man
And sayd thus Whan he hadde him a syde
Janycula I nether may ne can
The plesaunce lengere of my herte hyde
If that thou vouchesauf that so betyde
Thy doughter wol I take or that I wende
As to my wyf vnto her lyues ende
Thou louest me I wote it wele certayn
And art my feythful liege man vore
And al that lyketh me I dar wele sayn
It lyketh the and specially therfore
Tel me that poynte that I sayde bifore
And if thou wylt vnto that purpos drawe
To take me for thy sonne in lawe
This sodeyn caas this man astoned so
That rede he weyt abasshyd and al quakyng
He stode. vnnethe sayd he wordes mo
But onely thus lord quod he my wyllyng
Is as your wyl ne agaynst your lykyng
I wol no thyng ye be my lorde sodere
Right as you lyst gouerneth this matere
yet wol I quod this markes softly
That in your chambre I and you and she
Haue a collacion and woteste thou why
For I wol a stre if it her wyl be
To be my wyf and reule her after me
And al this shal be do in thy presence
I nyl nat spekе oute of thyn audience
And in the chambre while they were aboute
Her tretees whiche as ye shal after here
The people cam into the house al withoute
And wondred them in hou honest manere
And so tentesly kept her fader dere

But vtterly grisilde wondre myght
For neuir erst ne saWe she suche a sight
No wondre is thought she were stoned
To se so grete a gest come in that place
She neuir was to no suche gestes y Woned
For Whiche she loked With ful pale face
But shortly forth this matere for to chace
These been the wordes that the markes sayd
To this verry benygne feythful mayde
Grisilde he sayde ye shal Wele vnderstond
It lyketh vnto youre fadre and vnto me
That I you Wedde and eke it may so stonde
As I suppose ye Wyl that it so be
But thies demaundes ashe I ferst quod he
That sithen it shalbe done in hasty Wyse
Wol ye assent or elles you auyse
I say thus be ye redy With gode herte
To al my lust and that I frely may
As me best thynkith though ye laugh or smert
And neuir ye to gruche nyght ne day
Whan I say ye that ye say nat onys nay
Nother By Worde ne By frounyng countenaunce
Swere this and here I swere oure alliaunce
Wondrynge vpon these wordes quakynge for drede
She sayd lord indigne and vnWorthy
I am to suche honoure as ye me bede
But as ye Wol youir self right so Wol I
And here I swere that neuir Wyllyngly
In Werke ne thought I Wol you disobeye
For to be dede though me Were loth to dye
This is ynough grisilde myn quod he
And forth he goth With a ful sobre cheze
Oute at the doze and aftez cam she

And to the people he sayde in this manere
This is my wyf quod he that stondith here
Honoureth her and loueth her I you pray
Who so me loueth ther is no more to say
And for that nothyng of her olde gere
She sholde bryng into his house he badde
That women sholde dispoyle her there
Of whiche these ladies were nat ful gladde
To handel her clothes where in she was cladde
But natheles this mayde bright of hewe
Fro foote to hede they clothed her alle newe
Her heris they kempte that lay untressyd
Ful rudely and with theire fyngers smale
A crowne on her hede they haue ydressyd
And set her ful of ouches grete and smale
Of her array what shulde I make a tale
Vnneth the people her knewe for her fayrnesse
Whan she translatyd was in suche richesse
This markes hath her spoused with a ryng
Brought for the same cause and than her set
Vpon an horse snowe white ful wele amblyng
And to his paleys or he lengere let
With ioyfulle people that her ledde and mette
Conueyed her and thus the day they spende
In reuel tyl the sonne gan discende
And shortly forth this tale for to chace
I say that to this newe marriage
God hath suche fauoure sent of his grace
That it ne semyd by no lykelenes
That she was borne and fed in rudenesse
As in a cote or in an oxes stalle
But norisshed in an emperours halle
To euery wight she woxen is so dere

And worshipful that folke there she was borne
And from her birthe knewe her yere by yere
Vnneth trowed they but durst haue swore
That to Sanicula of whiche I spake bifore
The doughter was for as by coniecture
Them thought she was a nother creature
For though that euir vertuous was she
She was encresed in suche excellence
Of thewes gode set in high bounte
And so discrete and faire of eloqnence
So benygne and so digne of reuerence
And coude so the peoples hertes enbrace
That eche her loued that loked in her face
Nat only of saluces in the toun
Publisshed was the bounte of her name
But eke beyde in many a regioun
If one sayde weke another sayde the same
So spredde of her bounte the fame
That men and women bothe yong and olde
Goon to saluces vpon her to beholde
This walter lowly nay but ryally
Wedded hath with fortunat honeste
In goddes peas lyueth ful honestly
At home and outward grace ynough hadde he
And for he sawe that vndre lowe degre
Was honest vertue hyd the people him helde
A prudent man and that is seen ful selde
Nat only grisilde though her wyt
Coude al the feet of wyfly humblenes
But eke when that the caas requyred it
The comune proufet coude she redresse
There nas discorde rancor ne heuynes
In al the londe that she coude it apeas

And wysely bryng them in rest and eas
Though her husbonde were absent or none
If gentylmen or other of that countre
Were wroth she wolde bryng them at one
So wyse and rype wordes had she
And in iugement so grete equyte
That she from heuyn sent was as men wende
People to saue and euery wrong to amende
Nat long tyme after that this grisilde
Was weded she a doughter had y bore
Al had her lyuer bore a knaue childe
Glade was the marques and the folke therfore
For though a mayde childe cam al bifore
She may bin to a knaue childe atteyne
By lykelehode sithen she nys nat barreyne

Explicit pars secunda
Et sequitur pars tercia

t Her fyl as it fallith ofte tyme mo
Whan that this childe had soked but a throwe
This markes in his herte longith so
To tempte his wif her sadnes to knowe
That he ne myght oute of his hert throwe
This meruaylous desire his wif to assay
Nedeles god wote he thought her to affrey
He hadde assayed her ynough of tyme bifore
And fonde her euir good What nedith it
Her for to tempte and alwey more and more
Though som may pryse it for a subtel wyt
But as for me I say ful euyl it syt
To assay a wyf whan it is no nede
And put her in aunguyssh and in drede

For whiche this markes wrought in this maner
He cam allone a nyght there as she lay
With sterne face and right vgly chere
And sayde thus grisilde quod he that day
That I you toke fro youre arraye
And put you in estate of high noblesse
ye haue nat that forgoten as I gesse
I say grisilde the present dignyte
In whiche I haue put you as I trowe
Wherwith you nat forgetful for to be
That I you toke in poure estate ful lowe
For any wele ye must youre selue knowe
Take hede of euery worde what I say
There is no wight that herith but we twey
ye wote youre selfe how that ye cam here
In to this house it is nat long a go
And though to me ye be both leef and dere
Vnto my gentylles be no thyng so
They say to them it is grete shame and wo
For to be subgette and be in seruage
To the that born art in so smalle a village
And namely sithen thy doughter was y bore
These wordes haue they spoken doutles
But I desire as I haue doon bifore
To lyue myself with them in rest and peas
I may nat in this caas be recheles
I must do with thy doughter for the best
Nat as I wolde but as my people lyst
And yet god wote this is ful lothe to me
But natheles withoute youre wyttyng
I wol nat do but this I wel quod he
That ye to me assente as to this thyng
Shewe now youre pacience in youre worchyng

That ye me hight and ſwore in yone bylleye
That day that made was oure mariage
Whan ſhe hadde herde al this ſhe nat ameuyd
Nether in worde in chere ne in countenaunce
For as it ſemed ſhe was nat aggreuyd
She ſayth lorde al lyth in your pleſaunce
My childe and I with hartely obeyſaunce
Been youre owne and ye may ſaue and ſpylle
youre owne thyng do ye after youre wyl
Ther may be nothyng ſo god my ſoule ſaue
Lykyng to you that may diſpleaſe me
Ne I deſire no thyng in any wiſe to haue
Ne drede for to leſe ſaue only ye
This wyl is in myn herte and ay ſhalbe
No lengthe of tyme or deth may this deface
Ne turne my corage to none other place
Glade was this marques of her aunſwerynge
But yet it ſemyd as it were nat ſo
Al drery was his chere and his lokynge
Whan that he ſholde oute of the chambre go
Sone after this a furlong wey or two
He pryuely hath tolde al his entent
Vnto a man and to his wyf him ſent
A maner of a ſeriaunt was this preuy man
The whiche that feythfulle he founde had
In thynges grete and eke ſuche folke wel can
Done excuſacioun in thynges badde
The lorde knewe wele that he him loued and drad
And whan this ſeriaunt knewe his lordes wyl
In to the chambre ſtalked him ful ſtyl
Madame he ſayde ye muſt forgeue it me
Though I do thynge whiche I am conſtreyned
Ye be ful wyſe and ful wele knowe ye

That lordes heeſis may nat be feyned
Though I do thyng whiche I am conſtreyned
But men muſt nede vnto theire luſt obeye
And ſo wol I there is no more to ſey
This childe I am comaunded for to take
And ſpake nomore but oute the childe he hent
Diſpitouſly and gan a chere to make
As though he wolde haue ſlayn it or he went
Griſilde muſt alle ſuffre and concent
And as a lambe ſhe ſytteth mekе and ſtylle
And lete this crnel ſeriaunt do his wyl
Suſpecious was the fame of this man
Suſpecte his face ſuſpecte his worde alſo
Suſpecte the tyme in whiche he this began
Allas her doughter that ſhe loued ſo
She wende he wolde haue ſlayn it tho
But neuirtheles ſhe nether wept ne ſighed
Conformyd her to that the marques lyked
But at the laſt ſpeke than ſhe began
And mekely ſhe to the ſeriaunt prayde
So as he was a verry gentylman
That ſhe myght her childe kyſſe onys or he dyed
And in her barme ſhe the lytel childe leyde
With ful ſadde face and gan the childe to blyſſe
And lulled it and after gan it kyſſe
And thus ſhe ſayde in her benygne voyce
Fare wele my childe I ſhal the neuir ſe
But ſithen I haue the markyd with the croyce
Of thylke fadre bliſſed moot thou be
That for vs dyed vpon the croce of tre
Thy ſoule lytel childe I him betake
For this nyght ſhalt thou dye for my ſake
I trow that to a noryce in this caas

Jt had be herde this routhe for to se
Wele myght a modre thay haue cryed allas
But natheles so sadde and stedefast Was she
That she endured al aduersite
And to the seriaunt mekely she sayde
Haue here agayn youre lytel yong mayde
Goth now quod she and do my lordes heest
But one thyng wyl J pray you of youre grace
But if my lorde forbade you at the leest
Burieth this lytel body in som place
That beestes ne foules it to rase
But he to that purpos no Worde Wolde say
But tok the childe and went vpon his Wey
This seriaunt cam to the lorde agayn
And of Grisildes wordes and her chere
He tolde him poynte by poynte short and playn
And him presented With his doughter dere
Sum What this lorde had reWthe in his manere
But natheles his purpos held he styl
As lordes doon When they Wol haue theire Wyl
And bad his seriaunt that he pryuyly
Shulde the childe soft Wynde and Wrappe
With alle the circumstaunces tenderly
And carye it in a coffre or in a lappe
But on peyne his hede of for to swappe
That noman sholde knoW of this entent
Ne Whens he cam ne Whether that he Went
But at Boleyn he to his sustre dere
That ilke tyme of pauy Was countesse
He sholde it take and shewe her this matere
Bisechyng her to do her besynesse
This childe to fostre in alle gentylnesse
And Whose childe that it is she bad her hyde

From euery wight for ought that may betyde
The seriaunt goth and hath fulfilled this thing
But to this markes now retourne we
For now goth he ful fast ymaginyng
If by his wyues chere he myght se
Or by her worde perceyue that she
Were chaunged but neuir coude he fynde
But euir in one lyke sadde and hynde
As gladde as humble as besy in seruice
And eke in loue as she was wont to be
Was she to him and in euery maner wyse
Ne of her doughter nat one worde spake she
Noy accident for none aduersite
Was seyn in her ne neuir her doughter name
Ne named she in ernest ne in game

Explicit tercia pars
Et incipit pars quarta

I N this estate ther past by foure yere
Or she with childe was but as god wolde
A mayn chylde she bare by this Walter
Ful gracious and fayre for to beholde
And whan that folke it to his fadre tolde
Nat only he but alle his countre mery
Was for this chylde and god they thanke and hery
Whan it was two yere olde and fro the breest
Departyd fro his norice upon a day
This marques caught yet a nother lyst
To tempte his wyf yet ofter if he may
Vnnedeles was she temptyd in assay
But wedded men ne can no mesure
Whan that they fynde a pacient creature

wyf quod this marques ye haue herde or this
My people berith heuy sikerly oure mariage
And namely sithen my sonne y borȝ is
Now it is worse than euir in al oure age
The murmure sleth my hert and my corage
For to myn erys cometh the voyce so smert
That it ful nygh distroyed hath myn herte
Now say they thus whan Walter is agone
Than shal the blode of Janycula succede
And be oure lorde for other haue we none
Suche wordes sayth my people oute of drede
Wele ought I of suche murmure take hede
For certaynly I drede al suche sentence
Though they nat pleyn in myn audience
I wolde lyue in pease if that I myght
Wherfore I am disposed ful bterly
As this sustre sezuyd by nyght
Right so I thynke to serue him pryuely
This warne I you that ye nat sodenly
Oute of youz self for no wo sholde outray
Be pacient and therof I you pray
I haue quod she sayd thus and euir shal
I wol nothyng in no manez certayn
But as you lyst nothyng greuyth me at al
Though that my doughtez and my sonne be slayn
At youz comaundment this is for to sayn
I haue hadde no parte of childreyn tweyn
But first seeknes and aftez wo and peyn
Ye been ouze lorde doth with youze owne thyng
Right as you lyst a skith no rede of me
For as I left at home al my clothyng
Whan I cam first to you right so quod she
Left I my wyl and alle my liberte

And take youre clothyng wherfore I you pray
Doth youre plesaunce I wol youre lust obey
And certis if I hadde any prescience
your wyl to knowe or ye youre lust me tolde
I wolde it do withouten negligence
But now I wote your lust and what ye wolde
Al youre plesaunce ferm and stable I holde
For wyst I that my deth myght do you ease
Right gladly wolde I dye you to please
Deth may nat make no comparison
Vnto youre loue. and whan this markes say
The constaunce of his wyf he cast a doun
His eyen two and wondred that she may
In pacience suffre al this manere aray
And forth he goth with drery countenannce
But to his herte it was ful grete plesaunce
This bigle seriaunt in the same wyse
That her doughter caught right so he
Or worse if men can worse deuyse
Hath hent her sonne that ful is of beaute
And euir in one so pacient was she
That she no chere made of heuynes
But kyst her sonne and after gan him bles
Saue she prayed him if that he myght
Her lytel sonne he wolde in the erthe graue
His tendre lymmes delycate in sighte
Fro foules and fro bestes it to saue
But she none other aunswere of him myght haue
He went his wey as he nothyng ne rought
But to Bolayne he it tenderly brought
This marques wondred euir lengre the more
Vpon her pacience and if that he
Ne hadde knowe sothly ther bifore

That parfytely her children loued she
He wolde haue wende that of som subtelte
And of malice and for cruelle corage
That she had fustryd this with sadde corage
But wele he knewe that neyt him self certayn
She loued her childe best in any wyse
But now of women wolde I aske ful fayne
If these assayes myght nat suffise
What coude a sturdy husbonde more deuyse
To preue her wyfhode or her stedefastnesse
And he contynuyng euir in sturdynesse
But ther be folke of suche condicion
That whan they haue a certayn purpos take
That can nat stynt of their entencioun
They wyl nat of their first purpos slake
But right as they were bounde at a stake
Right so this marques hath fully purposed
To tempte his wif as he was first disposed
He wayted if by worde or countenaunce
That she to him was chaunged of corage
But neuir coude he fynde any variaunce
She was ay in one herte and in visage
And ay the ferther that she was in age
The more trewe if it were possible
She was to him in loue and more penyble
For whiche it semyd thus that of them two
There was but one wyl for but as walter list
The same lust was her plesaunce also
And god bethanked al fyl for the best
She shewyd wele for none worldly bureste
A wif as of her selue no thyng ne sholde
Wyl in effecte but as her husbonde wolde
The sclaundre of walter wondre wyde spradde

od i

That of cruel herte he ful wyckedly
For he a poure woman wedded hadde
Hath murdred bothe his children pryuely
Suche murmure was among them comonly
No wondre is for to the peoples ere
Ther cam no worde but that they murdred were
For whiche there as the people there bifore
Had loued him wele the sclaundre of his defame
Made them that him they hated therfore
To be a murdrer is an hateful name
But natheles for erneste ne for game
He of his cruel purpos wolde nat stynt
To tempte his wif was alle his entent
Whan that his doughter twelue yere was of age
He into the courte of Rome in subtel wyse
Enfourmed of his wyl sent his message
Comaundyng them suche bulles to deuyse
As to his cruel purpos may suffise
How that the pope bad as for his peoples rest
That he shulde wedde another wyf if he lyst
I say he bad they shulde countrefete
The popes bulles makyng mencioun
That he hath leue his first wyf for to lete
As by the popes owne dispensacioun
To stynt the rancor and the discencion
Betwene his people and him thus sayd the bulle
The whiche they haue publisshed at the fulle
The rude people as no wondre ne is
Wende ful wele that it had be right so
But whan these tydynges cam to griselidis
I deme that the herte of her was ful wo
But she ylyke sad was euirmoo
Disposed was this humble creature

The aduersite of fortune al to endure
Abydyng euir his lust and his plesaunce
To whom that she was yeuen herte and al
As to his herys Worldly suffisaunce
But shortly if I this story tel shal
This marques Writeth hath in especial
A lettre in Whiche he she With his entent
And secretly to Boleyne hath it sent
To the erle of pauy Whiche had tho
Weddyd his sustre prayed him specially
To bryng home ayen his children two
In honourable state al openly
But one thyng he him prayed btterly
That he no wight though they dyd enquere
Sholde nat tel Whoos children that they were
But say the mayde shal Wedded be
Vnto the marques of saluces anone
And as this erle Was prayed so dyd he
For at the day set he on his Wey is gone
Towarde Saluces and lordes many one
In riche array this mayde for to gyde
Her yong brother rydyng by his syde
Arrayed ful fresshe in her manere
This fresshe mayde ful of gemmys clere
Her brother Whiche seuyn yere Was of age
Arrayed ful fresshe in his manere
And thus in gret noblesse and glade chere
Towarde saluces spedyng their iournay
Fro day to day they ryden in their Wey

Explicit pars Quarta
Et incipit pars Quinta

a Mong al this after the wicked vsage
This marques is yet aboute to tempte more
The vttereſt preef of hir corage
Fully to haue experience and lore
If ſhe were as ſtedfaſt as biforе
He on a day in open audience
Ful boiſtouſly hath ſayd here this ſentence
Certis griſilde I haddе ynough of pleſauncee
To haue you to my wyf for youre godeneſſe
As for youre trouthe and youre obeyſaunce·
Nat for youre lynage ne for youre richeſſe
But now knowe I my verry ſothfaſtnes
That in grete lordſhippe if I wyl anyſe
There is grete ſemitude in ſondre wyſe
I may nat do as euery plowman may
My people conſtreyneth me for to take
A nother wyf and cry day by day
And eke the pope rancor for to ſlake
Conſenteth it that dar I vndertake
And truly this moche I wol you ſay
My newe wyf is comyng by the way
Be ſtrong of herte and voyde anone her place
And that dower that ye broughtе vnto me
Takith it ayen I yeue you leue of my grace
Retourneth to your faders houſe quod he
No man may haue alwey proſperite
With euyn herte I rede you to endure
The ſtroke of fortune or of auenture
And ſhe agayn aunſwered in patience
My lorde quod ſhe I wote and wyſte alwey
How that betwene youre magnificence
And my pouerte. no wight can ne may
Make any compariſon. it is no nay

I ne helde me neuir digne in no manere
To be youre wyf ne be youre chamberer
And in this house there ye me lady made
The hight god take I for wytnes
And also wysely he my soule glade
I neuir helde me lady ne maystres
But humble seruaunt to youre worthynes
And euir shal while that my lyf my dure
Aboue euery worldly creature
That ye haue so long of youre benygnyte
Holde me in high honoure and nobley
Where as I was nat worthy for to be
That thanke I god and you to whom I prey
Foryelde it you ther is nomore to say
Unto my fader gladly wold I wende
And with him duelle to my lyues ende
There I was fostryd of a childe ful smalle
Tyl I be dede my lyf there wol I lede
A wydowe clene in body herte and alle
For sithen I yaue to you my maydenhede
I am youre true wyf it is no drede
God shelde suche a lordes wyf to take
A nother man to husbonde or to make
And of youre newe wyf god of his grace
So graunte you wele and prosperite
For I wol gladly yelde her my place
In whiche I was blisful wont to be
For sithen it lyketh you my lorde quod she
That somtyme were al my hertes rest
That I shal go I wyl go whan ye lyst
But there as ye me profre suche dowayr
As I first brought it is wele in my mynde
It were my wrechid clothes nothyng fayre

The whiche to me were harde to fynde
O gode god how gentyl and how kynde
ye semyd by your speche and youre biſage
The day that made was oure mariage
But ſoth is ſayde alwey I fynde it trewe
For ty effecte y preuyd it is on me
Loue is nat olde as whan it is newe
But certis lorde for none aduerſite
To dye in this caas it ſhal nat be
That euir in worde in werke I ſhalle repente
That I you yeue my herte in hoole entent
My lorde ye wote that in my faders place
ye dyd me ſtrype oute of my poure wede
And richely ye me cladde of youre grace
To you brought I nought elles but of drede
But feyth nakidneſſe and my maydenhede
And here agayn my clothyng I reſtore
And eke my weddyng ryngе for euirmore
The remenaunt of youre iewelles redy they be
Within youre chambre I dar it ſauſly ſeyn
Naked oute of my faders houſe quode ſhe
I cam and naked muſt I turne agayn
Al youre pleſaunce folowe wolde I feyne
But yet I hope it be nat your entent
That I ſmokeles oute of youre paleys went
ye coude nat do ſo diſhoneſt a thyng
That thilke wombe in whiche youre children lay
Sholde biſore the people in my walkyng
Be ſeen al bare wherfore I you pray
Let me nat lyke a worme go by the way
Remembre you myn owne lorde ſo dere
I was youre wyf though I vn worthy were
Wherfore in guerdon of my madaynhede

Whiche that I brought and nat agayn here
As bouche sauf as gyue me to my mede
But suche a smoke as I was wont to were
That I therwith may wrye the wombe of here
That was your wyf and here I take my leue
Of you myn owne lorde lest I you greue
The smoke quod he that thou hast vpon thy bake
Let it be stylle and bere it forth with the
But wel vnneth that worde he spake
But wente his wey for routhe and pyte
Biforе the folke her self striped hath se
And in her smoke with fote and here alle bare
Tolwarde her faders house is she fare
The folke her folowyng weppyng in her wey
And fortune euir they cursed as they gone
But she fro weppyng kept her eyendrye
Ne in this tyme worde spake she none
Her fader that thise tydynges herde anone
Cursed the day and the tyme that nature
Shope him to be a lyues creature
For oute of doute thisolde poure man
Was euir suspecte of her mariage
For euir he demyd sithen it began
That whan the lorde had fulfilled his corage
He wolde thynke it were a disperage
To his estate so lowe for to light
And voyden her as sone as euir he myght
Ayenst his doughter hastely goth he
For he by noyse of folke knewe her comyng
And with her olde cote as it myght be
He heuerid her ful sorowfully weppyng
But on her body myght he it nat bryng
For rude was the clothe and she more of age

By daies fele thay was her mariage
Thay with her fadre for a certayn space
Duellyd this floure of wyfly pacience
That neuir by her worde ne by her face
Bifory the folke ne in her absence
Ne shewyd she that her was done offence
Ne of her high estate no remembraunce
Ne hadde she as by any maner countenaunce
No wondre was for in her grete estate
Her goost was euir in pleyn humylite
No tendre mouthe ne herte delicate
No pompe ne semblaunce of rialte
But ful of pacient benygnyte
Discrete and prydelesse and ay honourable
And ay to her husbonde mekе and stable
Men speke of Job and moost for his humblenesse
As clerkes whan them lyst can wele endite
Namely of men but in sothfastnes
Though clerkes pryse women but a lyte
Ther can no man in humblenes them acquyte
As women can ne can be half so true
As women been but it be falle of newe

Explicit Quinta pars
Et incipit pars Sexta

Fro Bolovne is this erle of pauy come
Of whiche the fame sprongе bothe les & more
And in the peoples eris alle and some
Was tolde how that he a newe marke sesse
With him brought in suche pompe and riches
That neuir was ther seen with mannys ey
So noble arraye in al west lumbardy
The marques whiche that shope and knewe al this

Or that this erle was come sent his message
For that sely poure creature Grysildis
And she with humble herte and glade vysage
Nat with no swelling thought in her corage
Cam at his heest and on her knees her sette
And reuerently and wysely she him gret
Grysilde quod he my wyl is ful vtterly
This mayden that weddyd shalbe to me
Receyued be to morowe also royally
As it is possible in myn house to be
And eke that euery wight in his degre
Haue his estate in sittyng and in seruise
And high plesaunce as ye can best deuyse
I haue no woman suffisaunt certayn
The chambres for to arraye in ordenaunce
After my lyst and therfore wolde I fayn
That thyn were al suche manere of gouernaunce
Thou knowest eke of olde al my plesaunce
Though thyn arraye be badde and eyl besey
Do thy deuoure yet at the lest wey
Nat only lorde that I am glade quod she
To do youre lust but I desire also
you first to please and serue in my degre
Without fayntyng and shalle euir mo
Ne neuir for no wele ne for no wo
Ne shal the goost within my herte stynt
To loue you best with alle my true entent
And with that worde she gan the house to dight
And tables for to sette and beddes for to make
And peyned her to do alle that she myght
Prayng the chamberers for goddes sake
To haste them and fast swepe and shake
And she the moost seruysable of alle

Hath euery chambre arrayed and his halle
  Aboute the ondryn this erle to gan light
That with him brought these noble children twey
For whiche the people ran to se that sight
Of their arraye richely they were beseye
And than at erst among them they sey
That walter was no fooke though that him lest
To chaunge his wyf for it was for the best
  For she is fayrer as they deme alle
Than is grisilde and more tendre of age
And fayrer fruyte bitwene them shal fal
And more plesaunt for her high lygnage
Her brother eke so fayre was of vysage
That them to se the people hath caught plesaunce
Comendyng now the marques gouernaunce
  O stormy people euir vnsadde and vntrue
Ay vndiscrete and chaungyng as a vane
Delityng euir in romble that is new
For lyke the mone ay waxe and wane
Ay ful of clappyng dere ynough a Jane
your dome is fals youre constaunce euyl preuyth
A ful grete fouke is he that on you leuyth
  Thus sayd sad folke in that cite
Whan that the people gaped vp and doun
For they were glade right for the nouelte
To haue a newe lady of their toun
No more of this now make I mencioun
But to grisilde agayn I wyl me dresse
And tel her constaunce and her besynesse
  Ful besy was grisilde in euery thyng
That to the fest was tho appertynent
Right naught was she abasshed of her clothyng
Though it were rude and somdele eke to rent

But with glade chere to the gate is went
With other folke to grete the marheſſe
And after that doth her beſyneſſe
With right glade chere ſhe his geſtes receyued
And ſo conyngly eche in his degre
That no defaute no man perceyued
But ay they wondred what ſhe myght be
That in ſo poure array was for to ſe
And coude ſuche honoure and reuerence
And worthely they pryſen her prudence
In alle this meane while ſhe ne ſtynte
This mayde and eke her brother to comende
With alle her hert in full benygne entent
So wele that no man coude her pryce amende
But at the laſt whan that lordes wende
To ſitte doun to mete he gan to calle
Griſilde as ſhe was beſy in the halle
Griſilde quod he as it were in his pley
How lyketh the my wyf and her beaute
Right wele quod ſhe my lorde for in gode fey
A fayrer ſawe I neuir none than is ſhe
I pray to god yeue her gode proſperite
And ſo hope I he wol to you ſende
Pleſaunce ynough to your lyues ende
O thing I beche you and warne alſo
That ye nat pryche with no tourmentyng
This tendre mayde as ye haue doo moo
For ſhe is foſtred in her noriſſhing
More tenderly and to my ſuppoſyng
She coude nat aduerſite wele endure
As conde a poure foſtred creature
And whan this walter ſawe her pacience
Her glade chere and no malice at alle

And he so ofte hadde do to her offence
And she ay constant and sadde as a Wal
Contynuyng euir her innocence ouir alle
This sturdy marques gan his hert dresse
To rewe vpon her Wifly stedefastnes
This is ynough grisilde myn quod he
Be now no more agast ne euyl appayed
I haue thy feyth and thy benygnite
As wele as euir woman was assayed
In grete estate or pouerly arrayed
Now knowe I dere wyf thy stedfastnes
And her in armes tok and gan her kysse
And she for wondre tok of it no kepe
She herde nat what thyng he to her sayde
She ferde as she had stert oute of her slepe
Tyl she oute of her masidnes abreyed
Grisilde quod he by god that for vs deyed
Thou arte my Wyf ne none other I haue
Ne neuir had. so god my soule saue
This is thy doughter Whiche thou hast supposed
To be my wyf that other feithfully
Shal be myn heire as I haue purposed
Thou bare him in thy body truly
At Boleyne haue I kept them pryuely
Take them ayen for now mayst thou nat say
That thou hast lory none of thy children twey
And folke that other wyse haue sayde by me
I warne them wele that I haue doon this dede
For no malice ne for no cruelte
But for to assay in the thy Womanhede
And nat to sle my children god forbede
But for to kepe them pryuely and stylle
Tyl I thy purpos knewe and thy wylle

Whan she this herde in swonynge doun she fallith
for pytous ioye and after swounynge
She to bothe her yonge childrey callith
And in her armes ful tenderly weppynge
Enbraced them and tenderly kyssynge
ful lyke a modre with her salt teris
She badith bothe theire visage and her heres
O whiche a pytous thynge it was to se
her swounynge and her pytous voyce to here
Graunt mercy lord god thanke you quod she
That ye haue saued me my childrey dere
Now reche I neuir to be dede euyn here
Sithen I stonde in youre loue and in youre grace
No doute of deth ne whan my spirite pace
O tendre o dere o yonge childrey myne
youre wofule modre wende ful stedefastly
That cruel houndes or som foule wermyn
Had etyn you but god of his mercy
And youre benygne fadre so tenderly
Hath doon you kepe and in that same stounde
Al sodenly she swapt doun to grounde
And in her swoune so sadly holdith she
Her childrey two whan she gan them enbrace
That with grete slight and grete difficulte
The childrey from her arme gan they arace
O many a teze ey many a pytous face
Doun ran of them that stode there beside
Vnneth aboute her myght they abyde
Walter her gladith and her sorowe slakith
She ryseth vp and abassheth from her traunce
And euery wight her ioye and fest makith
Tyl she hath caught agayn her countenaunce
Walter doth her so feythfulle plesaunce

That it was deynte for to se the chere
Bitwene them two now they be mette in fere
  Thise ladies whan they theire tyme say
Haue taken her and in to chambre anone
And striped her oute of her rude array
And in a clothe of golde that bright shone
With a crowne of many a riche stone
Upon her hede. they in to the halle her brought
And there she was honoured as her ought
  Thus hath this pytous day a blissful ende
For euery man and woman doth his myght
This day in myrthe and reuel to spende
Tyl on the welkyn shone the sterryslight
For more solempne in euery mannys sight
This feste was and of grete costage
Than was the reuel of theire mariage
  Ful many a yere in high prosperite
Lyuen these two in concorde and in rest
And richely his doughter maried he
Unto a lorde one of the worthiest
Of al Itayle and than in pease and rest
His wyues fadre in his courte he kepith
Tyl the soule oute of the body crepith
  His sonne succedith in his heritage
In rest and pees after his faders day
And fortunate was ehe in mariage
Al put he nat his wyf in grete assay
This worlde is nat so strong it is no nay
As it hath been in olde tymes yore
And herkenyth what this autoure sayth therfore
  This story is sayd nat for that wyues sholde
Folowe Grisilde as in high humylite
For it were importable though they wolde

But for that euery wight in his degre
Shulde be constante in alle aduersite
As was grisilde wherfore petrark writeth
This story whiche with high style he enditeth
For sithen a woman was so pacient
Vnto a mortal man wele more we ought
Receyue al in gode that god vs sent
For grete skylle is. he preue that he wrought
But he ne temptith no man that he bought
As sayth seint Jame if ye his epistel rede
He preuyth folke but a day it is no nede
And suffreth vs as for oure exercise
With sharpe scorges and aduersite
Full ofte to be bete in sondry wise
Nat for to knowe oure wylle but certis he
Or we were borne knewe al oure freelte
And for oure best is alle his gouernaunce
Lete vs lyue than in vertuous suffraunce
But one worde herkneth lordynges or I go
It were full harde to fynde now a dayes
Grisilides in al a countre thre or two
For if they were put to suche assayes
The golde of them hath so badde alayes
With bras. for though it be fayre at eye
It wolde rather brist a two than plye
For whiche here for the wyues loue of Bathe
Whoos lyf and secte myghty god mayntene
In high maystrye or elles were if scathe
I wyl with lusty hert fresshe and grene
Say you a song to glade you I wene
And let vs stynt of ernest matere
Herkneth my songe that sayth in this manere

Lennoye de Chaucer a les
marietz te nr̄e temps

¶ Risilde is dede and eke her pacience
And bothe at ones buried in Itayle
For whiche I crye in open audience
No wedded man so hardy be to assayle
His wifes pacience in truste to fynde
Grysilides. for certayn he shal fayle
O noble wyues full of hight̄ prudence
Let nat humylite youre tunges nayle
Ne let no clerke haue cause of diligence
To wryte of you a story of grete meruayle
As of grisilde pacient and kynde
Lest chenache you swalow in her entrayle
Folowyth ecco that holdith no silence
But euir aunswerynge at the countertayle
Be nat a daffyd for youre innocence
But sharply take on you the gouernayle
Enprentith wele that lesson in youre mynde
For comune proufet seyth it may auayle
ye archewyues stondeth at defence
Sithen ye be strong as is a grete camayle
Ne suffre nat that men do you offence
But shlendre wyues as feble in batayle
Beth egre as a tigre is fer in ynde
Ay clappynge as a mylle I you counseyle
Ne dredith them nat do them no reuerence
For thought thy husbonde armyd be in mayle
Thy arowes of thy crabbyd eloquence
Shal perse his breest and eke his auentayle
In ielousye I rede eke that thou him blynde
And shalt make him couche as a quayle
If thou be fayre there folke been in presence

Shewe thou thy visage and thyn apparayle
If thou be foule be fre of thy dispence
To gete the frendes ay do thy trauayle
Be ay of chere as light as leef on lynde
And lete him care wepe wryngе and wayle

Here endith the tale of the clerke of Dyenforde
Verba hospitis

t His worthy clerke whan endyd was his tale
Oure hoost sayde and swore by cockes bones
Me were lyuer than a barelle of ale
My wyf at home herde this legende onys
This is a gentyl tale for the nonys
As to my purpos wyst ye my wylle
But thyng that wylle nat be let it be stylle
Here endith the wordes of the hoost
Here begynneth the Nonnys prologue

t The mynistre and norisshyng vnto vyces
Which that men clepe in englysshe ydelnes
Which that is porter of the yate of delices
To eschewen and by their contrary them oppresse
That is to say by lefful besynes
Wele ought we to done alle oure entent
Lest that the feende With ydelnesse vs hent
For he With his thousand cordes slye
Contynually vs wayeth to be clappe
Whan he may man in ydelnesse aspye
He can so lightly catche him in his trappe
Tyl that a may be hent right by the lappe
He nys nat ware the feende hath him in honde
Wele ought vs Werke and ydelnesse withstonde
And though men drede neuer for to dye
yet se men Wele by reason doutles

That ydelnesse is open slogardy
Of whiche ther comyth neuir no gode encresse
And se that slougth her holdith in a lees
Only for to slepe and ete and drynke
And to deuoure al that other swynke
And for to put vs from suche ydelnes
That cause is of grete confusioun
I haue here dooy my feythful besynesse
After the legende and translacioun
Right so thy glorious lyf and passioun
Thou with thy garlonde wrought of rose of lyle
The mene I mayde and martyr seint Cecily
And thou that floure arte of virgynes alle
Of whome that Bernarde lust so wele to wryte
To the at my first begynnyng I calle
Thou comforte of vs wreches do me endite
Thy maydens deth that way throughh her merite
The eternalle lyf and of the feend victory
As men may after rede in her story
Thou mayde and modre doughter of thy sonne
Thou welle of mercy synful soules to cure
In whom that god of bounte chaas for to wonne
Thou humble and high ouir euery creature
Thou noblest so ferforth ouir nature
That no disdeyne thy maker hadde of hynde
His sonne in blode and flesshe to clothe and wynde
Whiche in the cloyster of thy blisful sides
Toke mannes shappe the eterne loue and peas
That of thy tryne compas lorde and gyde is
Whom heuyn and erthe and see withouten lees
Ay heryen and thou virgyn wembeles
Bare of thy body and dwellest mayde pure
The creatour of euery creature

Assembled is the magnificence
With mercy godenesse and With pyte
That thou that arte the sowy of excellence
Nat only helpest them that prayeth the
But often tyme of thy benignyte
Ful frely or that may thyn helpe seche
Thou gost bifore and art oure soules leche
Now helpe thou blissful and meke fayre mayde
Ye flemyd wretche in this deserte of galle
Thynke on the Woman of Canane that sayde
That Whelpes ete some of the the cromes smalle
That from theire lordes table been y falle
And though that I vnWorthy sonne of eue
Be synful yet accepte my beleue
And for that feyth is dede Withoute Werkes
So for to Werke yeue me Wytte and space
That I be quytte from thens there mooste derke is
O thou that art so fayre and ful of grace
Be myn aduocate in that high place
There as Withouten ende is sunge osanne
Thou cristes modre doughter dere of anne
And of thy light my soule in prysonlight
That troubled is by the cogitacioun
Of my body and also by the Wight
Of erthly lust and false affectioun
O hauyn of the refute o saluacioun
Of them that been in sorowe and distresse
Now helpe for to my Werke I Wol me dresse
yet I pray you that rede that I Write
Forgeue me that I do no diligence
This ilke storye besely to endite
For bothe haue I the Wordes and the sentence
Of him that at the seyntes reuerence

The ſtory wrote and folowed her legende
And pray you that ye wyl my werke amende
First wolde I you the name of ſeint cecily
Expoune as men may in her ſtory ſe
It is to ſay in engliſſhe heuynnes lyle
For pure chaſtnes of virginyte
Or for ſhe whitnes had of honeſte
And grene of conſcience and of good fame
The ſwete ſauoure lyly was her name
Or cecily is to ſay the wey to blynde
For ſhe enſample was by good techyng
Or elles cecily as I writen fynde
As ioyned by a maner conyng
Of heuyn and lya in her in figuryng
The heuyn is ſet for thought of holynes
And lya for her laſtyng beſyneſſe
Cecily may ek be ſayd in this manere
Wantyng of blyndeneſſe for her grete light
Of ſapience and for her thewys clere
Or elles lo this maydens name bright
Of heuyn and leos comyth of whiche by right
Men myght her wele the heuyn of people calle
Enſample of gode and wyſe werkes alle
For leos people in engliſſhe is for to ſay
And right as men may in the heuyn ſe
The ſonne and mone the ſterres euery wey
Right ſo men goodly in this mayden fre
Sawyng of feyth the grete magnamynite
And ek the clerenes ful of ſapience
And ſondry werkes bright of excellence
And right ſo as theſe philoſophers wryte
That heuyn is ſwyft and rounde and ek brennyng
Right ſo was fayre cecily the whyte

Ful ſwyft and in euery gode worhyng
And rounde and hole in gode perſeuerynge
And brennynge euir in charite ful bright
Now haue I declared you what ſhe hight

Here endith the Nonnes prologue
And begynneth hir tale

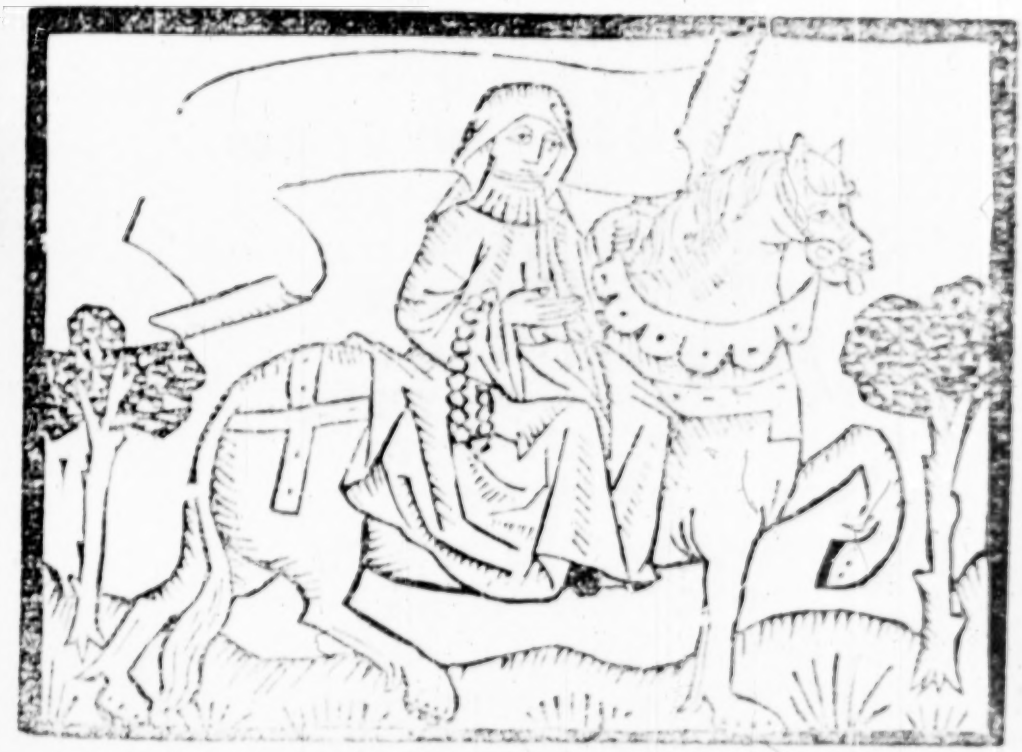


t His mayden bright Cecily as her legend ſayth
Was comen of Romaynes and of noble hynde
And from hir cradyl vp foſtryd in the feyth
Of crift and bare his goſpel in hir mynde
She neuir ceced as I wryten fynde
Of hir prayer and god to loue and drede
Beſechynge him to kepe hir maydenhede
And whan this mayde ſholde vnto a may
y weddyd be that was ful yong of age
Whiche that y clypped was Valerian

The ſtory wrote and folowed her legende
And pray you that ye wyl my werke amende
First wolde I you the name of ſeint cecily
Expoune as men may in her ſtory ſe
It is to ſay in engliſſhe heuynnes lyle
For pure chaſtnes of virginyte
Or for ſhe whitnes had of honeſte
And grene of conſcience and of good fame
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For ſhe enſample was by good techyng
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Men myght her wele the heuyn of people calle
Enſample of gode and wyſe werkes alle
For leos people in engliſſhe is for to ſay
And right as men may in the heuyn ſe
The ſonne and mone the ſterres euery wey
Right ſo men gooſtly in this mayden fre
Sawyng of feyth the grete magnamynite
And ek the clerenes ful of ſapience
And ſondry werkes bright of excellence
And right ſo as theſe philoſophers wryte
That heuyn is ſwyft and rounde and ek brennyng
Right ſo was fayre cecily the whyte

Ful ſwyft and in euery gode worthyng
And rounde and hole in gode perſeuerynge
And brennynge euir in charite ful brigbt
Now haue I declared you what ſhe higbt

Here endith the Nonnes prologue
And begynneth hir tale



t His mayden brigbt Cecily as her legend ſayth
Was comen of Romaynes and of noble kynde
And from hir cradyl bp foſtryd in the feyth
Of crift and bare his goſpel in hir mynde
She neuir ceced as I wryten fynde
Of hir prayer and god to loue and drede
Beſechyng him to kepe hir maydenhede
And whan this mayde ſholde vnto a man
Y weddyd be that was ful pouy of age
Whiche that y clypped was Valerian

And day was come of her mariage
She ful deuoute and humble in her corage
Vndre her robe of golde that sat ful feyre
Had neyt her flesshe y cladde her in an heyre
And while that the orgaynes made melody
To god aboue thus in her herte song she
O lorde my body and ehe my soule gye
Vnwemmyd lest I confounded be
And for his loue that dyed vpon the tre
Euery secounde and thridde day she fast
Ay abydyng in her orisons ful fast
The nyght cam and to bedde must she goon
With her husbonde as it was the manere
And pryuely she sayde to him anone
O swete and wele beloud spouse dere
Ther is a conceyle and ye wyl it here
Whiche that right fayne I wolde to you sey
So that ye swere ye wyl nat it bewry
Valerian gan fast to her swere
That for no caas ne thyng that myght be
He sholde neuir to none bewre thyn her
And than at erst to him sayde she
I haue an aungel whiche that louyth me
That with grete loue wherso I wake or slepe
Is redy ay my body for to kepe
And if that he may fele oute of drede
That ye me touche or loue in vylonye
He right anone wyl sle you with the dede
And in youre youthe thus shal ye dye
And if that ye in clene lyf me gye
He wol you loue as me for youre clenesse
And shewe to you his ioy and his brightnes
This Valerian corrected as god wolde

Aunſwerde agayn if I ſhal truſte the
Lete me that aungel ſe and him beholde
And if that it a verry aungel be
Than wol I do as thou haſt prayed me
And if thou loue a nother man forſothe
Right with this ſwerde than wol I ſle you both
Cecily aunſwerde anone right in this wyſe
If that ye lyſt the aungel ſhal ye ſe
So that ye trowe on criſte and you baptyſe
Goth forth to via appia quod ſhe
That from this toun ne ſtondith but myles thre
And to the poure folkes that there duel
Sey them as that I ſhal you telle
Tel them that I Cecily you to them ſent
To ſhewe you gode vrban the olde
For ſecrete nedes and for gode entent
And whan that ye ſeint vrban haue beholde
Telle him the wordes that I to you tolde
And whan that he hath purged you from ſynne
Than ſhal ye ſhe the aungel or wel wynne
This valerian is in to the place gone
And right as he was taught by her lernyng
He fonde this holy man vrban anone
Among the ſeyntes berielles lowtyng
And he anone withouten taryng
Dyd his meſſage and whan that he hadde tolde
Vrban for ioye gan his hondes vp holde
The teris from his eyen lete he falle
Almyghty god o Jeſu criſt quod he
Sower of chaſt counceyl hierd of vs alle
The fruyte of that ſede of chaſtite
That thou haſt ſowe in Cecily take to the
Lo lyke a beſy be withouten gyle

The ſeruyth ay thyn owne thralle cecile
For that ſpouſe that ſhe tohe but newe
Ful lyke a fers lyoun ſhe ſendith here
As mehe as euir was any lambe to ewe
And with that worde anone there gan appere
An olde man y cladde in white clothes clere
That hadde a bohe with lettre of gold in honde
And gan bifore valerian for to ſtonde
Valerian as dede fel doun for drede
Whan he this olde man ſawe ſtondyng ſo
Whiche forth with anon he herde him rede,
O lorde of alle o feyth o god withouten mo
O criſtendome o fadre of alle alſo
Aboue alle and ouir alle euery where
Theſe wordes al with gold writen were
Whan this was reddde than ſayd this olde man
Leuyſt thou this thing or no ſay ye or nay
Ileue al thyng quod valerian
For ſothez thyng than this I daz wele ſay
Vndre heuyn no wight thynke may
Tho vanyſſhed this olde man he ne wyſt where
And vrban him criſtned right there
Valerian goth home and fyndeth Cecily
Within his chambre with an aungel ſtonde
This aungel hadde of roſes and of lyly
Crownys two the whiche he bare in honde
And firſt to cecily as I vndrſtonde
He yaue that one. and afterz gan he take
That othez to valerian hez make
With body clene and vnwemmyd thought
Kepith ay wele theſe crownes quod he
Fro paradiſe to you them haue I brought
Ne nenir moze ſhal they rotyn be

Ne leſe theire ſwete ſauoure truſtith me
Ne neuir wight ne ſhalle ſe them with eye
But he be chaſte and hate velony
And thou valerian for thou ſo ſone
Aſſentyd to goddes counceyle alſo
Say what thou lyſt and thou ſhalt haue thy bone
I haue a brother quod valerian tho
That in this worlde I loue noman ſo
I pray you that my brother may haue grace
To knowe the trouthe as I do in this place
The aungel sayde god lyketh thy requeſt
And bothe with the palme of martirdome
ye ſhal come into this bliſful feeſt
And with that worde tyburce his brother come
And whan that he the ſauoure vndre nom
Whiche that the roſes and the lylyes caſt
Within his hert he gan to wondre faſt
And ſayd I wondre this tyme of the yere
Whens that this ſwete ſauoure comyth ſo
Of roſes and lylyes that I ſmelle here
For though I hadde them in myn hondes two
The ſauoure myght in me no deppir go
The ſwete ſmelle that in my herte I fynde
Hath chaunged me al in an other kynde
valerian sayde two crownes haue we
Snowe white and roſe rede that ſhyneth clere
Whiche that thyn eyn haue no myght to ſe
And as thou ſmellyſt through my prayer
So ſhalt thou ſe them leue brother deere
If it ſo be thou withouten ſouthe
Beleue a right and knowe verry trouthe
Tyburce aunſwerde ſayſt thou this to me
In ſotfaſtnes or in dreme I herkyn this

Jn dremys quod Valerian haue we be
Vnto this tyme brother myn ywys
But now at erst oure duellyng in trouthe is
How woteſt thou this quod tiburce in what wyſe
Quod Valerian that ſhal J the deuyſe
The aungel of god hath me the trouthe y taughte
Whiche thou ſhalt ſe if thou wylt renye
The ydolles and be clene and elles naught
And of the myracle of theſe crownes twey
Seynt ambroſe in his preface lyſt for to ſay
Solempnely this noble doctoure dere
Comendith it and ſayth in this manere
The palme of martirdome for to reſceyue
Seint cecile fulfilled of goddes yefte
The worlde and ehe her chambre gan ſhe weyue
Witnes Cecily and tiburces ſhrifte
To whiche god of his bounte wolde ſhyfte
Crounes two of floures ſwete ſmellyng
And made his aungel them the crownes bryng
The mayde hath brought them to the bliſſe aboue
The worlde hath wyſt that it is worthy certayn
Deuocioun and chaſtite wele for to loue
Tho ſhewde him cecily alle open and pleyn
That al ydolles been but a thyng in vayn
For they be dombe and therto they be deef
And charged him his ydolles for to leef
Who ſo nat trowith this a beeſt he is
Quod tho tiburce if J ſhalle nat lye
And ſhe gan kyſſe his breeſt that herde this
And was ful glade he coude trouthe aſpye
This day J take the for myn alye
Sayde this bliſſyd fayre mayden dere
And after that ſhe ſayde as ye may here

Lo right ſo as the loue of criſt quod ſhe
Made me thy brothers wyf right in this wyſe
Anone for myn alye here take I the
Fithen that thou wylt thyn ydelles diſpyſe
Go with thy brother now and the baptyſe
And make the clene ſo that thou may beholde
That aungelles face whiche thy brother of tolde
Tiburce aunſwerd and ſayd brother dere
Firſt tel me whether I ſhal and to what may
To whom quod he com forth with right gode chere
I wol the lede vnto the . . vrban
To vrban brother myn valerian
Quod tho tyburce wylt thou me thydre lede
Me thynketh that it were a wondre drede
Ne mene ye nat vrban quod he tho
That is ſo ofte dampned to be dede
And woneth in halkes alwey to and fro
And dar nat onys put forth his hede
Men ſholde him brenne in a fyre ſo rede
If he were founde if men myght him aſpye
And we alſo to bere him company
And while we ſeke that dyuinyte
That is hyd in heuyn pryuely
Algate brent in this worlde ſhal we be
To whom Cecily aunſwerde boldly
Men myght dede wele and ſkilfully
This lyf to loſe myn owne dere brother
If this were lyuyng only and none other
But there is better lyf in other place
That neuir ſhalbe loſt ne drede the nought
Whiche goddes ſonne vs tolde through his grace
That faders ſonne hath al thyng wrought
And alle that wrought is with a ſkilful thought

The gooſt that from the fadre gan procede
Hath ſouled him Withouten any drede
By worde and by myracle be goddes ſonne
Whan he Was in the worlde declared here
That there is other lyf there men may Wonne
To Whom anſWerd tyburce o ſuſtre dere
Ne ſaydeſt thou right now in this manere
Ther nas but one god lord in ſothfaſtnes
And now of thre how mayſt thou bere Wytnes
That ſhal I tel quod ſhe or that I go
Right as a man hath ſapiences thre
Memory engyne and intellecte alſo
So in ſuche beyng of dyuinyte
Thre perſones may there right Wele be
Tho gan ſhe there ful beſily him preche
Of criſtes ſonne and of his peynes teche
And many poyntes of his paſſioun
How goddes ſonne in this worlde Was Withholde
To do mankynde pleyn remiſſioun
That been bounde in ſynnes and cares colde
Alle theſe thynges ſhe to tyburce tolde
And after this tyburce in god entent
With valerian to [illegible]rban Went
That thanked god and With glade hert and light
He criſtned him and made him in that place
Parfyte in his lernyng goddes knyght
And after this tyburce gat ſuche grace
That euery day he ſawe in tyme and ſpace
The aungel of god and euery maner bone
That he god aſkyd it Was ſpedde ful ſone
It were ful harde by ordre for to ſayn
How many Wondres ieſus for him Wrought
But at the laſt to telle ſhorte and playn

The ſergeauntes of the toun them ſought
And them bifore almache the prefecte brought
Whiche them appoſ.d and hne we al theire entent
And to the ymage of Jubitez them ſent
And ſayd Who ſo wol do no ſacrifice
Swappe of his hede this is my ſentence here
Anone theſe martirs that J you deuyſe
One mayimus that was ay officere
Of the prefectes and his councellere
Them hent and the ſeyntes forth ladde
Him ſelf he wept for pyte that he hadde
Whan mayimus hadde herde the ſeyntes lore
He gat him of the turmentours leue
And had them to his houſe Withouten more
And With theire prechyng or it Was eue
They gan fro the turmentoures for to reue
And fro mayyme and fro his folke echone
The fals feyth to trow in god allone
Cecily cam Whan it Was woyte nyght
With preſtys that them criſtned al in fere
And after Ward Whan day Was woyn light
Cecily ſayde them With a ful ſtede faſt chere
Now criſtes owen knyghtes leef and dere
Caſt al away the werkes of derknes
And arme you With the armes of brightnes
ye haue forſoth done a grete batayle
your cours is done youre feyth hath you conſeruyd
Goth to the croune of lyf that may nat fayle
The right full iuge Whiche ye haue ſeruyd
Shal yeue it you as ye haue it deſeruyd
And Whan this thyng Was ſayde as J deuyſe
Hen ledde them forth to do ſacrifice
But Whan they were to the place y brought

To telle ſhortly the concluſioun
They nolde encence ne ſacrifice right naught
But on theire knees ſytten them adoun
With humble herte and ſadde deuocioun
And loſen bothe theire hedes in the place
Ther ſoules went to the kynge of grace
This maximus that ſawe this thynge betyde
With pytous teris tolde it anone right
That he their ſoules ſawe to heuyn glyde
With aungels ful of clernes and light
And with his worde conuertyd many a wight
For whiche almachius dyd him ſo to bete
With whippes of lede tyl he his lyf gan lete
Cecily him tokc and buried him anone
By tyburce and valerian ſothly
Within her buriyng place vndre the ſtone
And after this almachius haſtely
Badde his miniſtres fetche openly
Cecily ſo that ſhe myght in his preſence
Do ſacrifice and Jubiter encence
But they conuertyd at her wyſe lore
Wepte ful ſore and yaue ful credence
Vnto her worde and cryde more and more
Criſt goddes ſonne whiche without difference
Is verry god this is oure ſentence
That hath a ſeruaunt ſo gode him to ſerue
This with o voyce we crye though we ſterue
Almachius that herde of this doynge
Bad fetche Cecily that he myght her ſe
And alderfirſt this was his aſkynge
What maner woman art thou quod he
I am a gentyl woman born quod ſhe
Ja ſhe it the quod he though it the greue

Of thy religioun and of thy beleue
Why thay began ye youre questioun foolily
Quod she that wolde two aunsweres conclude
In one demaunde ye aslyd lewdly
Almache aunswerde to that similitude
Of whens compth thyn aunswere so rude
Of whens quod she. Whan that she was freyned
Of conscience and of gode feyth vnfeyned
Almachius sayde takest thou none hede
Of my power and she aunswerd him thys
youre myght quod she is full lytel to drede
for euery mortalle mannys power nys
But lyke a bladder ful of wynde y wys
for with a nedelles poynte whan it is blowe
May alle the bost of it be leyde ful lowe
Ful wrongfully began thou quod he
And in wrong is yet al thy perseueraunce
Wotest thou nat how oure prynces mighty and fre
Haue thus comaunded and made ordenaunce
That euery cristen wight shal haue penaunce
But if that he his cristendome withsay
And gooy al quyte if he wyl it reney
youre princes erren as youre nobley doth
Quod thocecile in a wode sentence
ye make vs gyltye and it is nat sothe
for ye that knowe wele ouze innocence
for asmoche as we do ay reuerence
Tocriste and for we bere a cristen name
ye put on vs a cryme and eke a blame
But we that knowe that name so
for vertuous we may it nat withsaye
Almache aunswerde chese one of these two
Do sacrifice or cristendome reney

That thou may ſchape by that weye
At whiche worde this holy bliſſful mayde
Gan for to laughe and to the iuge ſayde
O iuge confuſed in thy nycete
Wolt thou that I reſceyue innocence
To make me a wycked wight quod ſhe
Lo he diſſimyleth here in audience
He ſtareth and wodeth in his aduertence
To whom almache ſayd o ſely wretche
Ne woteſt thou nat hou fer my wytte may ſtretche
Haue nat oure mygthty prynces yeuyn
To me both power and auctorite
To make folke bothe to dye and lyuen
Why ſpekyſt thou than ſo proudely to me
I ſpeke naught but ſtedfaſtly quod ſhe
Nat proudely for I ſay for my ſyde
We hate dedely that vyce of pryde
And if thou drede nat a ſoth for to here
Than wyl I ſhewe al openly by right
Thou that haſt made a ful gretele ſynghere
Thou ſayſt thy prynces haue yeue the mygth
Bothe for to ſle and for to quycken a wight
That thou may ſt only but lyf bereue
Thou haſt none other power ne no leue
But thou mayſt ſay thy princes haue the maked
Myniſtre of deth for if thou ſpeke of mo
Thou lieſt for thy power is ful nakyd
Do wey thy boldneſſe ſayd almache tho
And do ſacrifice to oure goddes or thou go
I reche nat what wrong thou me profer
For I can ſuffre as can a philoſopher
But that wrongtes may I nat endure
That thou ſpekyſt of oure goddes here quod he

O Cecily aunswere o nyce creature
Thou saydest no worde sithen thou spakest to me
That I ne knowe therwith thy nycete
And that thou were in euery manez wyse
A lewde officez and a lewde iustise
There lacketh no thyng of thyn vtter eyen
But thou art blynde foz thyng that we se al
That is a stone that men may wele aspyen
That ilke stone a god thou wylt it calle
I rede the let thyn honde vpon it falle
And taste it wele and stone thou shalt it fynde
Sithen that thou seest nat with thyn eyen blynde
It is a shame that the people shalle
So scorne the and laughe at thy foly
Foz comonly men wote it wele ouir alle
That mythty god is in heuynnes hye
And these ymages wele thou mayst aspye
To the ne to them self may do no profette
Foz in effecte they be nat worthe a myte
This and suche othez wordes sayde she
And he woyte wrothe and bad men sholde hez lede
Home vnto her house and in hez house quod he
Brenne hez in a bathe of flamys rede
And as he badde right was it do in dede
Foz in a bathe they gan her fast shytten
And nyght and day fyre they vndre betyn
The long nyght and eke the day also
Foz al the fyre and eke the grete hete
She sat al colde and felt no manez wo
It made her nat a droppe foz to swete
But in that bathe her lyf she motlete
Foz almachius with a ful wycked entent
To sle hez in bathe his sonde to hez sent

Thre strokes in the neche he smote her tho
The turmentoure but for no maner chaunce
He myght nat smyte her neche a two
And for ther was that tyme an ordenaunce
That noman sholde do no persone suche penaunce
The fourth stroke to smyte soft or sore
This turmentoure ne durst do no more
But half dede with her neche corruen there
He left her lye and on his wey he went
The cristen folke whiche that aboute her were
With shetes haue the blode vp hent
Thre daies lyued she thus in this turment
And neuir cesed them the feyth to teche
That she had fostryd them she gan to preche
And them she yaue her mouables and her thyng
And to gode vrban betoke them tho
And sayde I ashed this of heuyn kyng
To haue respite thre daies and no mo
To recomende to you or that I go
These soules lo and that I may do wirche
Here of my house perpetually a chirche
Seint vrban with his dekyns pryuely
The body fet and buried it by nyght
Among his other seyntes honestly
Her house the chirche of seynt cecily hight
Saynt vrban halowed it as he wele myght
In whiche vnto this day in noble wyse
Wey do to criste and to his seyntes seruise

Here endith the Nonnes tale
And here begynneth the prologue
Of the chanons yeman

Whan tolde was the lyf of ſeint Cecile
Or we hadde ryden fully fyue myle
At boughton vndre ble vs gan a take
A man that clothed was in clothes blake
And vndrenethe he ware a white ſurplice
His hakney whiche was of pomelgryce
So ſwette he that wondre was to ſe
It ſemyd that he hadde prycked myles thre
Aboute the patrel ſtode the fome ful hye
He was of fome as flycked as a pye
The hakney eke that his ye man rode vpon
So ſwette that vnnethes myght it goon
A male twyfolde vpon his croppy lay
It ſemyd that he carped lyte & arzay
Alright for ſomer rode this worthy man
And in myn herte to wondre I began
What that he was tyl that I vndre ſtode
How that his cloke was ſowed to his hode
For whiche whan I hadde long auyſed me
I demyd him ſom chanon for to be
His hatte hyng at his bake doun by a lace
For he hadde ryden more than trotte or pace
He rode ay prychyng as he were wode
A clote leef he hadde leyde vndre his hode
For ſwete and for to kepe his hede fro hete
But it was iape for to ſe him ſwete
His forehede droppyd as a ſtylla tory
Were ful of plantey or of peritory
And whan he was come he gan crye
God ſaue quod he this ioly company
Faſt haue I prycked quod he for youre ſake
Bicauſe that I wolde you ouir take
To ryde in this mery company

His yeman was ek ful of curtesye
And sayde sires now in the morowe tyde
Oute of youre hostrye I sawe you ryde
And warned here my lorde and soueray
Whiche that to ryde with you is ful fay
For his disporte he loueth daliaunce
Frend for thy warnyng god yeue the gode chaunce
Thay sayde oure hoost certayn it wolde seme
Thy lorde were wyse and so I may wele deme
He is ful iocunde also dar I ley
Can he ought telle a mery tale or twey
With whiche he glade may this company
Who sir my lord, ye sir withouten lye
He can of myrthe and ek of iolite
Nat but ynow also sir trustith me
And ye him knewe as wele as do I
ye wolde wondre how wele and craftely
He coude werke and that in sondry wyse
He hath taken on him many a grete empryse
Whiche were ful hard for any that is here
To bryng aboute but they of him it lere
As homely as he rydeth amonges you
If ye him knewe it wolde be for youre prow
ye wolde nat forgoon his acqueyntaunce
For mekyl good I dar ley in balaunce
Al that I haue in my possessioun
He is a man of high discrecioun
I warne you he is a passyng wyse man
Wele quod oure host I pray the telle me than
Is he a clerke or none tel me what he is
A clerke nay nay he is gretter than a clerke ywys
Sayd this yeman and in wordes fewe
Hoost and of his craft somwhat wol I shewe

Sir my lorde can ſuche a ſubtelte
But alle his craſte ye may nat wytte of me
For al the grounde to caunterbury toun
He coude alle clene turne vp ſo doun
And paue it al with ſiluer and with golde
And whan this yeman hath thus tolde
Vnto oure hooſt. he ſayde benedicite
This thing is wondre meruey lous to me
Sithen that thy lorde is of ſo high prudence
Bicauſe of whiche ſholde men him reuerence
That of his worſhippe recchith he ſo lyte
His ouereſt ſloppe is nat worth a myte
As in effecte to him ſo moot I goo
It is alle baudy and to tore alſo
Why is thy lord ſo ſlotyſſhe I the pray
And of power is bettre clothe to bey
If that his dede accorde with his ſpeche
Tel me that and that I the beſeche
Why quod this yeman wherto aſke ye me
God helpe me ſo for he ſhal neuir the
But I wyl now auowe that I ſay
And therfore kepe it ſecrete I you prey
He is to wyſe in feyth as I beleue
That is ouir do it wol neuir preue
And right as clerkes ſay it is a vyce
Wherfore in that I holde him lewde and nyce
For whan a man hath ouir grete a wytte
Ful oft it happith him to myſs vſe it
So do my lorde and that me greuyth ſore
God it amende I can ſay nomore
Therof no force gode yeman quod oure hooſt
Sithen of the connyng of thy lorde thou booſt
Tel how he doth tel on now hardely

Sithen that he is ſo crafty and ſo ſlye
Where dwelle ye if it to telle be
Sayd the ſubarbes of a toun quod he
Lurkyng in hernys and in lanys blynde
Where as theſe robbers and theſe theuys be hynde
Holden theire ferdful pryue reſidence
As they that dar nat ſhewe theire preſence
So fare we if we ſhal ſay the ſothe
Now quod oure hooſt let me talke tothe
Why art thou ſo deſcoloured in thy face
Peter quod he god yeuyth harde grace
I am ſo vſed the hote fyre to blowe
That it hath chaunged my coloure I trowe
I am nat wont in no myrroure to prye
But ſwynke ſore and lerne to multiplye
We blundryn euir and pouryn in the fyre
And for alle that we fayle of oure deſire
For euir we lacke oure concluſioun
To moche folke we do illuſioun
And borowe golde be it a pounde or two
Or ten or twelue or many ſommes mo
And make them wene at the leſt wey
That of a pounde we coude make twey
Sayn is falſe and ay we haue gode hope
It for to do and after it we grope
But that ſcience is ſo fer vs bifory
We may nat al though we hadde it ſwory
It ouir take it flytte awey ſo faſt
It wol vs make beggars at the laſt
Whyle this yeman was thus in talkyng
This chanon drewe him nere and herde al thyng
Whiche this yeman ſpake for ſuſpectioun
Of mennys ſpeche euir hadde this chanon

For caton sayth he that guilty is
Demyth al thyng to be spoke of hym ywys
That was the cause he gan so nygh drawe
To this yeman to herkyn alle his sawe
And thus he sayde to his yeman tho
Holde thou thy peas and spek no mo
For if thou do thou shalt it dere abye
Thou sclaundrest me here in this company
And eke discoueryst that thou sholdest hyde
ye quod oure hoost tel on what so betyde
Of alle this thretyng recke thou nat a myte
In feyth quod he no more I do but lyte
And whan this chanon sawe it wolde nat be
But that this yeman wolde telle his pryuyte
He fledde awey for verry sorowe and shame
A ha quod the yeman here shal ryse a game
Al that I can anoon I wol you tel
Sithen he is goon the foule fende him quelle
For neuir heraftir wol I with him mete
For peny ne for pounde I you behete
He that me first brought to that game
Or that he dye sorowe haue he and shame
For it is erneste to me by my feyth
That fele I wele what that any man sayth
And yet for alle my smert and alle my greef
For al my sorowe laboure and myscheef
I coude neuir leue it in no wyse
Now wold to god my wytte myght suffise
To telle alle that longith to that arte
But natheles you wol I tel a parte
Sithen that my lord is goon I wol nat spare
Suche thyng as I knowe I wol declare

The tale of the chanons yeman

Here endith the prologue of
the Chanons yeman
And begynneth his tale



W Jth this chanon J dwelled ſeuyn yere
And of his ſcience am neuir the nere
Al that J hadde J haue loſt therby
And god Wote ſo haue mo than J
Of clothyng and of other gode aray
There as J Was Wonte to be right freſſhe and gay
Now may J Were an hoſe vpon myn hede
And Where my coloure Was bothe White and rede
Now it is Wan and of a ledyn hewe
Who ſo it vſyth ſore ſhal he rewe
And of my ſwynke y blent is myn eye
Lo ſuche auauntage it is to multiplye
That ſtydyng ſcience hath made me ſo bare
That J haue no gode Where that euir J fare

And yet I am endettyd so sore therby
Of golde that I borowed truly
That whyle I lyue I shal it quyte neuir
Let euery man be ware by me for euir
What maner man that castith him therto
If he contynue I holde his thryfte y do
For helpe me god therby shal he nat wynne
But enpeyre his purse and make his wytte thynne
And whan he through his madnes and his foly
Hath lost his owne gode through iepardy
Than he exciteth other men therto
To lese theire gode as he him self hath do
For vnto wretches iope it is and ease
To haue theire felowes in peyne and disease
For thus was I onys lernyd of a clerke
Of that no charge I wol spekе of oure werke
Whan we be there as we shal exercise
Oure elupsshe craft we seme wondre wyse
Oure termys been so clergyalle and so queynte
I blowe the fyre tyl my herte feynte
What sholde I tellе eche proporcion
Of thyngis which we worke vpon
As on fyue or seyvnces may wele be
Of syluer or some other quantite
And besy me to tellе you the names
Of orpement brent bones iron squames
That into powder grounde be ful smalle
And in an erthen potte how put is alle
And salt petyr and also papyre
Biforn these powders that I spekе of here
And wele y couered with a lampe of glas
And of moche other thyng whichе that there was
And of the pottys and glasses enlutyng

That of the eyre myght passe oute notyhng
And of the fyre easy and smert also
Whiche that Was made and of the care and Wo
That We hadde in oure maters sublymyng
And in amalgamyng and calcenyng
Of quyesyluer cleped mercury crude
For alle oure slighes We can nat conclude
Oure orpement and sublymed mercury
Oure grounden litarge eke on the perfury
Of eche of tham of bnces a certayn
Nat helpith bs oure laboure is in beyn
And eke oure spirites ascencioun
Ne oure maters that lyen al fix a doun
May in oure Worhyng no thyng auayle
For lost is alle oure laboure and trauayle
And alle the coost a tWenty deuyl Wey
Bs lost also Whiche We on it ley
For ther is also ful many a nother thyng
That is to oure crafte appertaynyng
Though I by ordre them reherse ne can
Bicause that I am a lewde man
yet Wol I tel them as they come to mynde
Though I ne can nat sette them in their hynde
As bool armonyache beerdegrece boras
And sondry besselles made of erthe and glas
Oure bynales and oure descensories
Violes crossolettes and sublymatories
Conturbites and alembykes eke
And other suche dere ynough a leek
Nat nedith it to rehersse them alle
Waters rubifiyng and boles galle
Arsenyk sal armonyake and brymstone
And herbes eke coude I telle many one

as egrymonyne Valerian and lunary
And other ſuche if that me lyſt to tary
Oure lampes brynne nyght and day
To bryngе aboute oure craft if that we may
Oure furneys eke of calcinacioun
And of waters albifycacioun
Unſleclyd lyme chalke glayre of ayeye
Poudres dyuerſe aſſhes dongе pyſſe and clеye
Herd pottes ſalt petyr vytriole
And dyuers fyres made of wode and cole
Sal tartyr alcoly and ſal preparate
And combuſte maters and coagulate
Cley made with horſe dongе mannys here and oyle
Of tartre alym glas berme worte and argule
Rosalgar and other maters enbibyngе
And eke of oure maters encorporyng
And of oure ſpiritz citrynacioun
Oure ſementyng and oure fermentacioun
Oure ingottes teſtes and many moo
I wol you telle as me was taughte alſo
The foure ſpirites and the bodies ſeuyn
By ordre as I herd my lord neuyn
The firſt ſpirite quyckeſilver clepyd is
The ſecounde orpement the thridde pewys
Sal armonyacke and the fourth brymſtone
The bodies ſeuyn loke them there anon
Sol golde is and luna ſilver we threpe
Mars iron Mercury quyckeſilver we clepe
Saturnus lede and iubiter is tyn
And venus copper by my fader kynne
This curſed craft who wol exerciſe
He ſhalle no gode haue that may ſuffiſe
For alle gode he ſpended theire aboute

Relese shal therof haue I no doute
Who so that lystith bttez his soly
Let him come forth and lerne to multiply
And euery man that hath ought in his cofre
Let him appere and weye a philosophez
Preest oz chanon oz any othez wight
Though he sytte at his boke day and nyght
Inlernyng of this elupsshe nyce loze
Alle is in beyn and parde moche moze
Is to lerne a lewde may this subtelte
Iy spelze nat therof it wol nat be
And cay he lettrature oz cay he none
As in effecte he shal synde it al one
Foz bothe two by my saluacioun
Concludeyin multiplicacioun
Al liche wele whay they haue alle y doo
This is to sayn they sayle bothe two
yet forgate I to make rehersayle
Of watres cozosyf and of lymayl
And of bodies mollificacioun
And also of theire enduracioun
Dyles ablacions metalle susible
To telle you it wolde passe any byble
That olwhere is therfoze as foz the best
Of these names now wol I me rest
Foz as I trowe I haue tolde ynow
To repse a feende al loke he neuir so row
A nay let be the philosophers stoon
Elixer we clepe we seke fast echoon
Foz hadde we him thay were we sikez ynowe
But vnto god of heuyn I make anowe
Foz alle oure craft whay we haue alle y do
And alle oure sleyghte he wel nat come vs to

He hath made vs spende moche gode
For sorowe therof almoost we weyen wode
But that gode hope crepith in oure herte
Supposyng euir though we sore smert
To be releuyd by him afterwarde
Suche supposyng and hope is sharpe and harde
I warne you wele it is to selyn euir
That future temps hath made men disseuir
In truste therof alle that euir they hadde
yet of that arte they can nat wey sad
For vnto them it is a byttir swete
So sempth it for ne had they but a shete
Whiche that myght wrappe them in a nyght
And a bratte to walken in by day lyght
They wolde it selle and spende it in this craft
They can nat stynt tyl no thyng be laft
And euir more where that they goon
Men may them kenne by smelle of brymstoon
For al the worlde they stynke as a gote
Their sauoure is so rammyssh and so hote
That though a man a myle from them be
The sauoure wyl enfecte him trustith me
Lo thus by smellyng and thredebare aray
If that men lyst these folke knowe they may
And if a man wol aske them pryuely
Why they be clothed so vnthriftely
Right anone they wol rounne in his ere
And say if that they aspyed were
Men wolde them slee bicause of their science
Lo thus these folke betrayen innocence
Thus ouir this I my tale vnto
Or that the potte be on the fyre y do
And metalles a certayn quantite

My lorde them temprith and no man but he
Now is he goon I dar say boldly
For as men say he can do craftely
Algate I wote wele he hath suche a name
And yet ful ofte he ynneth in the blame
And wote ye how ful ofte it farith so
The pot to breketh and fare wele al is do
The metalles been of so grete violence
Our walles may nat make them resistence
But if they were wrought of lyme and stone
They perse so and throughe the walle they gone
And som of them synke doun in the grounde
Thus haue we lost by tyme many a pounde
And som ar scatred al the flooze aboute
Some lepith in the roof withouten doute
Though that the feende in oure sight him nat shewe
I trow that he with vs be that ilke shrewe
In helle where he is lorde and syre
Ne is ther more wo ne rancor ne yre
Whan that oure pote is broken as I haue sayd
Euery man chyt and holdith him euyl appayed
Some sayde it was of the fyre makyng
Some sayd nay it was of the blowyng
Than was I aferde for that was myn office
Strawe quod the thridde ye be lewde and nyce
It was nat tempryd as it ought to be
Nay quod the fourthe stynte and herkyn me
Bicause oure fyre was nat made of beche
That is the cause and other none sitheche
I can nat telle where on it was alongt
But wele I wote grete stryf is vs amongt
What quod my lorde ther is no more to doon
Of these parzelles I wol be ware essone

I am right syker that the potte was crased
Be as be may be ye nat amasyd
As vsage is let swepe the floze swythe
Pluche vp youre hertes and be glade and blythe
The mullone on an hepe sweppyd was
And on the flooze cast a canuas
And alle the mullone in a syde y throwe
And syftyd and pyched many a throwe
Parde quod one somwhat of ouz metalle
yet is ther here though we haue nat alle
And though this thyng myshapped hath as now
Another tyme it may be wele ynow
We must put oure gode in auenture
A marchaunt parde may nat ay endure
Trustith me wele in his prosperite
Somtyme his godes been drenchyd in the see
And somtyme it compth sauf vntolonde
Peas quod my lorde the neyte tyme I wol fonde
To bryng oure craste al in an other plyte
And but I do sires lete me haue the wyte
Ther was a defaute in somwhat wele I wote
Another sayde the fyre was ouir hote
But be it hote oz colde I daz say this
That we conclude euirmoze amys
We fayle alwey of that we wolde haue
And in oure madnes euir moze we raue
And whan we be to gydderz euerichone
Euery man semyth as wyse as salamon
But alle thyng whiche that shyneth as golde
It is nat golde as I haue herde tolde
Ne euery appyl that is fayre at eye
Nys nat gode what so we clappe oz crye
Right so it farith amonges vs

He that sempth wyseſt by swete Jesus
Is mooſt foole whan it compth to the preef
And he that sempth trewest is a theef
That shal ye knowe or that I from you wende
Be that my tale be tolde vnto an ende
There was a chanon of religioun
Amonges vs wolde enfecte al a toun
Though it were as grete as was nynyue
Rome Alisaundre troye or other thre
His slightes and his infinyte falsenesse
Ne coude noman write as I gesse
Though that he myght lyue a thousand yere
In alle the worlde of falsnesse nys his pere
For in his termys he wyl him so wynde
And spehe his wordes in so slighly kynde
Whan he comen shal with ony wight
That he wol make him dote anon right
But it a feende be as him self is
Ful many a man hath he begyled or this
And wol if that he lyue may a whyle
And yet men ryde or go many a myle
Him for to seke and haue his acqueyntaunce
Nat knowyng of his fals gouernaunce
And if ye lyst to yeue me audience
I wol it tel here in youre presence
But worshipful chanons religious
Ne deme th nat that I sclaundre youre house
Al though my tale of a chanon be
Of euery ordre som shrewe is parde
As god forbede that al a company
Shulde rewe a syngulers mannys foly
To sclaundre you it is no thyng myn entent
But to correcte that is mys went

This tale was nat only tolde for you
But ehe for other mo ye wote wele how
That amonges cristes apostelles twelue
There nas no traytoure but iudas him selue
Than why sholde we remenaunt haue a blame
That gyltles were by you I say the same
Saue only this if ye wol herkyn me
If any Judas in youre couent be
Remeuyth him betymes I you rede
If shame or losse may cause any drede
and be nothyng displeased I you pray
But in this caas herkyn what I say
I N london was a preest Annuelere
That therin hadde duelt many a yere
Which was so plesaunt and so seruysable
Vnto the wyf where as he went to table
That she wolde suffre him no thyng to pay
For borde ne clothyng went he neuir so gay
and spendyng syluer hadde he right ynowe
Therof no force in plesaunce went his plowe
But for to telle you forth of this chanon
That brought this preest to confusion
This fals chanon cam vpon a day
Vnto the preestes chambre where he lay
Besechyng him to lene him a certayn
Of golde and he wolde quyte him agayn
Lene me a marke quod he but daies thre
At my day I wol sauns fayle quyte it the
And if so be thou fynde me thay fals
Another day hang me by the hals
This preest him tok a marke and that as swythe
And this chanon him thanked oftsythe
And tok his leue and went forth his wey

And at the thridde day brought̃e his money
And to this preest he tok̃e his golde agayn
Wherof this preest was wondre glade and fayne
Certis quod he no thyng annoyeth me
To lene a man a nobl̃e two or thre
Or what thyng were in my possessioun
Whan he is so true of condicioun
That in no wyse breke he wol his day
To suche a man I can nat say nay
What quod this chanon sholde I be vntrue
Nay that were a thyng fallen of newe
Trouthe is a thyng that I wol euir kepe
Vnto that day in whiche I shal crepe
Into my graue or elles criste forbede
Beleuyth this as sykr as the crede
God I thanke and in gode tyme be it sayde
That ther nas neuir man yet euyl payde
For golde ne siluer that he me lent
Ne neuir falshede in myn herte I ment
And sir quod he now of my pryuyte
Sithen ye so godeliche haue been to me
And kydith to me so grete gentylnesse
Som what to quyte with youre kyndnesse
I wol you shewe if that ye lyst here
I wol you teche plener the matere
How I can worke in philosophye
Take gode hede ye shal wele se at eye
That I wol a maystrye do or I go
ye sir quod the preest and wyl ye so
Mary therof I pray you hartely
At youre comaundment sir truly
Quod the chanon and elles criste forbede
Lo how this theef coude his seruice bede

Ful soth it is that suche profezed seruise
Stynketh as wytnessith the olde wyse
And that right sone I wol it verify
By this chanon rotte of alle trechery
That euirmoze delite hath and gladnesse
Suche feendly thoughtes in his herte impresse
How cristes people he may to mychief bryng
God hepe vs from his falsse dissymlyng
Nought wyst this preest with whom that he delte
Ne of his harme comyng no thyng he felte
O sely preest o sely innocente
With couetyse anone thou shalt be blent
O graceles ful blynde is thy conceyte
No thyng art thou ware of his disceyte
Whiche that this foy shapen hath to the
His wyles his wrenches thou mayst nat fle
Wherfoze to go to the conclusioun
That referzyth to thy confusioun
Vnhappy man anon I wol me hye
To telle thy vnwytte and thy foly
And eke the falseneesse of that othez wretche
As ferforth as my conyng wyl stretche
This chanon was my lozd ye wol wene
Sir hoost in feyth and by heuens quene
It was a nothez chanon and nat he
That can an hundred folde moze subtelte
He hath betrayed folke many a tyme
Of his falseneesse it dullith me to ryme
Euir whan I speke of his falsehede
Foz shame of him my chekes wexen rede
Algates they begynne foz to glowe
Foz redeneesse haue I none right wele I knowe
In my vysage foz fumes dyuerse

Of metalle Whiche ye haue herde me reherce
Consumed and Wastyd hath my redenesse
Now taketh hede of this chanons cursidnesse
Sir quod he to the preest let your man gone
For quycsiluer that We hadde it anone
And let him bryng vnces two or thre
And Whan he compth as fast ye shal se
A wondre thyng Whiche ye saWe neuir or this
Sir quod the preest it shal be do pWys
He badde his seruaunt fetche him this thyng
And he al redy Was at his byddyng
And Went him forth and cam anone agayn
With this quycsiluer shortly for to seyn
And tolde the vnces thre to the chanon
And he them kepde Wele and fayre adoun
And badde the seruaunt coles for to bryng
That he anon myght go to his Worknyng
The coles right anon Were y fette
And this chanon tolde oute a crosselet
Of his bosom and sheWde it to the preest
This instrument quod he Whiche that thou seest
Take in thy honde and put thy self therin
Of this quycsiluer an vnce and begynne
Fy the name of crist to Wey a philosopher
Ther be ful fe We Whiche I Wolde it profer
To sheWe them thus moche of my science
For here shal ye se by experience
That this quycsiluer I Wol mortify
Right in youre sight anon Withouten lye
And make it as gode syluer and as fyne
As there is any in youre purse or myn
Or elles Where and make it malliable
And elles holde me fals and vnstable

Amonges folke for euir to appere
I haue a poudre that cost me dere
Shal make al gode for it is cause of alle
My conning Whiche I you shewe shal
Voydeth youre man and let him be Without
And shytte the doze Whyle We be there aboute
Oure pryuete that noman vs aspye
Whiles that We Worke in this philosophye
Al as he badde fulfylled Was in dede
This ilke seruaunt anon oute yede
And his mayster shytte the doze anon
And to their laboure spedely they goon
This preest at this cursed chanons byddyng
Vpon the fyre right anon set this thyng
And blewe the fyre and besyed him fulle faste
And this chanon into the crosselet cast
A poudre nat I neuir Whereof it Was
y made of chalke of erthe oz of glas
Oz som What elles Was nat Worth a flye
To blynde With this preest and badde him hye
The coles for to couche alle aboue
For in tokenyng that I the loue
Quod this chanon. thyn hondes two
Shal Werke al thyng that here shalbe do
Gramercy quod this preest and Was right glade
And couched the coles as the chanon bade
And While he besy Was. this feendly Wretche
This false chanon the foule feende him fetche
Oute of his bosom toke a bechyn cole
In Whiche ful subtelly Was made an hole
And therin Was put of syluer lymaile
An vnse and stoppyd Was Without en fayle
The hole With Wex to kepe the lymayle in

And vnderstondeth that this false gyn
Was nat made there but it was made before
And other thynges that I you telle shal more
Herafter whiche he with him brought
Or he cam there him to begyle he thought
And so he dyd or that they yede atwynne
Tyl he hadde ternyd him he coude nat twynne
It oullyth me whan that I of him spelke
Of his falsehede fayn wolde I me wrethe
Yf I wyst how but he is here and there
He is so variaunt he abydeth no where
But takith hede sires for goddes loue
He tolke his cole of whiche I spake aboue
And in his honde he bare it pryuely
And whiles this preest couched besily
The coles as I you tolde or this
This chanon sayd frende ye doo amys
This is nat couchyd as it ought to be
But sone I shalle amende it quod he
Now let me medle therwith but a while
For I haue of you pyte by seint gyle
ye be right hote I se how ye swete
Haue here a clothe and wype awey the wete
And whiles the preest wyped his face
This chanon tolke his cole with sory grace
And leyde it aboue vpon the mydwarde
Of the crosselet and blewe wele afterward
Tyl that the coles gan fast to brenne
Now yeue vs drynke quod the chanon thenne
As swythe al shalbe wele I vndertake
Syt we doun and let vs mery make
And whan this chanon his bechyn cole
Hadde broughte and the lymayle oute of the hole

Into the crosselet it fyl anon doun.
And so it must nedes by reason
Sithen it so euyn aboue couched was
But therof wyst the preest nothyng alas
He demyd alle the coles lyche gode
For of the slight he nothyng vnderstode
And whan this alchamystre sawe his tyme
Ryse vp sir preest he sayde and stond by me
And for I wote Wele ingot haue ye none
Go walketh forth and bryngeth a chalkstone
For I wol make of it the same shappe
That an ingot is if it may happe
And bryng ehe With you a bolle or a pan
Ful of watez and ye shalle Wele se thanne
How that oure besyneſſe shal thryue and preue
And for ye shal haue me tyno my sbeleue
Ne Wrong concept of me in youre absence
I wol nat be oute of youz presence
But go With you and come With you agayn
The chambre doze shortly for to seyn
They opened and shytte and Went theire Wey
And forth With them they tokē the key
And cam ayen Without any delay
What shold I tary alle the long day
He tokē the chalke and shope it in a wyse
Of an ingotte as I shal you deuyse
I say he tokē oute of his owne sleue
A teyn of silueꝛ eyl mot he cheue
Whiche that ne Was but an vnce of wyght
And tahith hede now of this cursed slight
He shope his ingot in lengith and in brede
Of this teyn Withouten any drede
So slyghly that the preest it nat aspyed

And in his sleue agayn he gan it hyde
And from the fyre he toke vp the matere
And in the ingot he put it with mery chere
And into the watez vessel he it cast
Whan that himself and bad the preest as fast
Loke what there is put in thyn honde and grope
Thou shalt synde there syluez as I hope
What deuyl of helle sholde it ellis be
I know of syluez syluez is sir parde
He put his honde in and toke vp a teyn
Of syluez fyne and glade in euery deyne
Blythe was this preest whan he sawe it was so
Goddes blyssyng and his moders also
And alle halowes haue ye sir chanon
Sayde this preest and I her malisoun
But and ye vouche sauf to teche it me
This noble crafte and this subtelte
I wol be poure man in alle that euer I may
Quod this chanon yet wol I make assay
The seconde tyme that ye may take hede
And be experte in this at poure nede
Another day assay in myn absence
This disciplyne and this crafty science
Let take another vnce quod he tho
Of quyksilueꝛ without wordes mo
And do therwith as ye haue do oꝛ this
With that other whiche that now syluez is
The preest him besyeth al that euir he can
To do as this chanon this cursed man
Comaunded him and fast bleWe the fyre
Foꝛ to come to the effecte of his desyre
And this chanon right in this meane whyle
Al redy Was the preest foꝛ to begyle

And for countenaunce in his honde bare
An holowe stycke take kepe and be ware
In the ende of whiche an ounce and more
Of syluer lymayle put as sayde is bifore
Was in his cole and stoppyd with wey wele
For to kepe in his lymayle euery dele
And while the preest was in his besynesse
This chanon with his stycke gan it dresse
To him anon and his poudre caste in
As he dyd erst. the deuyl oute of his skyn
Him turne I pray to god for his falsehede
For he was euir falsse in thought and dede
And with his stycke aboue his crosselet
That was ordeyned with that falsse get
He sterid the coles tyl al relente begann
The wey ayenst the fyre as euery man
But it a fool be wote wele it must nede
And alle that in the stycke was oute yede
And in the crosselet hastely fel
Now gode sires what wol ye bet than wel
Whan that this preest was thus begyled agayn
Supposyng nought but trouthe soth to sayn
He was so glade I can nat expresse
In no maner his myrthe and his gladnesse
And to the chanon he profred eftsone
Body and gode. ye quod the chanon anon
Though I be poure crafty thou shalt me fynde
I warne the wele yet is ther more behynde
Is there any coper herin quod he
Ye quod the preest sir I trowe ther be
Elles go bye bs som and that as swythe
Now gode sir go forth thy wey and hythe
He went his wey and with his copyr cam

And the chanon in his honde it nam
And of that copre he weyd oute an vnce
Alle to symple is my tonge to pronounce
As to my nistre of my wytte the doublenesse
Of this chanon rote of alle cursydnesse
He semyd frendly to them that knewe him nought
But he was feendly bothe in herte and thought
It werpeth me to telle of his falsenesse
And natheles yet wol I it expresse
To that entent that men may be ware therby
And for none other cause truly
He put this vnce of copez in his crosselet
And on the fyre as swythe he it set
And cast in poudre and made the preest to blowe
And in his workyng for to stoupe lowe
As he dyde ere and al was but a iape
Right as him lyst the preest he made his ape
And after in the ingot he it cast
And in the panne put it at the last
Of watez and in he put his owne hande
And in his sleue as ye bifore hande
Herd me tel and he hadde of siluez a tayn
He slightly tok it oute this cursed heyn
Vnwetyng of the preest of this false crafte
And in the pannes botom he it laft
And in the watez rombleth to and fro
And wondre pryuely he tok vp also
The coppez teyn nat knowyng the preest
And hyd it and him hent by the breest
And to him spake and thus he sayd in game
Stoupeth adoun by god ye be to blame
Helpe me now as I dyd you while ere
Put in youre hond and lokith what is there

This preest tok̄e vp this siluer teyn anoon
And thayn sayd the chanon let vs goon
With these thre teynes whiche that we haue wrought
To som goldsmyth to lok̄e if they be oughte
For by my feyth I nolde for myn hode
But if they were syluer fyne and good
And that as swythe preuyd it shalbe
Vnto the goldsmyth with these teynes thre
They went and put these teynes in assay
To fyre and hamer myght no man say nay
But that they were as them ought to be
This sottyd preest who was gladder thayn he
Was neuir byrde gladder ayenst the day
Ne nyghtyngale in the seasoyn of may
Was neuir noon that best lyst to syng
Ne lady lustyer in carolyng
Or for to speke of loue or womanhede
Ne knyght in armes to done ayn hardy dede
To stonde in grace of his lady dere
Thayn hadde this preest this sory craft to lere
And to the chanon thus spake he and seyde
That for the loue of god that for vs al deyd
And as I may deserue it vnto you
What shal this receyte coste tel me now
By oure lady quod this chanon it is dere
I warne you wele that saue I and a frere
In Englond can no man it make
No force quod he now sir for goddes sake
What shal I pay telle me I you pray
I wys quod he it is ful dere I say
Sir at one worde if ye lyst it to haue
ye shalle pay fourty pounde so god me saue
And nere the frendshyp that ye dyd or this

To me ſholde ye paye nomore ywys
This preeſt the ſumme of fourty pounde anon
Of nobles fet and tolde them euerichoon
To this chanon for his ilke receyte
Alle his worhyng was but fraude and biſceyte
Sir preeſt he ſayd I hepe to haue no loſſe
Of my craſte for I wol hepe it cloſſe
And as ye loue me hepe ye it ſecre
For if men knowe alle my ſubtelte
By god they wolde haue ſo grete enuye
To me bicauſe of my philophye
I ſholde be dede ther were none other wey
God forbede quod the preeſt what ye ſay
yet hadde I lyuer ſpende al the gode
Whiche that I haue or elles were I wode
Than that ye ſhulde falle in ſuche a myſchief
For poure gode wylle ſir haue ye right gode preef
Quod this chanon and fare wele graunt mercy
And went his way and neuer the preeſt him ſe
After that day, and whan this preeſt ſholde
Make aſſay at ſuche tyme as he wolde
Of this receyte fare wele it wol nat be
Lo thus beiaped and begyled was he
Thus maketh he his introductioun
To bryng folke to their diſtructioun
Conſidreth fires how that in eche eſtate
Betwixte men and golde ther is debate
So ferforth that vnnethes is there none
This multiplieng blyndeth ſo many one
That in gode feyth I trowe thad it be
The cauſe greteſt of ſuche ſcarſite
These philoſophers ſpeken ſo myſtely
In this craſte that men can nat come therby

For any wytte that men may haue now a dales
They may wele chatery as doon Jayes
And in theire termys settyn their lust and peyn
But to theire purpos shal they neuir atteyn
A man may lightly lerne if he haue ought
To multiply. and bryng his gode to nought
Lo whiche a lucre is in this worthy game
A mannys myrthe it wol turne vnto grame
And empte also grete and heuy purses
And maken folke for to purchace curses
Of them that haue theire gode to them lent
O fy for shame tho that haue be brent
Alas can they nat flee the fyres hete
ye that it vse I rede that ye it lete
Lest that ye lese al for bette than neuir is late
Neuir to thryue were to long a date
Though ye prolle euir neuir shal ye it fynde
ye be as bolde as is bayerd the blynde
That blundreth forth and parel castith none
He is as bolde to rynne agaynst a stone
As for to go besides in the wey
So fare ye that multiply I sey
If that youre eyen can nat se a right
Loke that youre myndelache nat his sight
For though that ye loke right brode and stare
ye shal wynne neuir of that chaffare
But waste alle that ye may rappe and renne
Withdraw the fyre lest it to fast brenne
Medlith no more with that arte I mene
For if ye do youre thrifte is gone fulclene
And right as swythe I wyl you telle here
What philosophers sayd in this matere
Lo thus sayth Arnolde of the newe tonn

As his rosary maketh mencioun
He sayth right thus without eny lye
Ther may no man mercury mortefy
But if it be with his brothers knowleggyng
Lo how that he which first sayd this thyng
Of philosophers fadre was hermes
He sayth how that the dragon doutles
Ne dieth nat but if that he be slayn
With his brother and that is for to seyn
By the dragon Mercury and none other
He vnderstondeth and brymstone be his brother
That oute of sol and luna were y drawe
And therfore sayde he take hede to my sawe
Let no man besy him this arte for to seche
But he the entencion and the speche
Of philosophers vnderstonde can
And if he do he is a lewde man
For this science and this konnyng sayd he
Is of the secrete of secretes parde
Also ther was a disciple of plato
That on a tyme sayde his mayster to
As his boke semor wolbere wytnes
And this was his demaunde in sothfastnes
Tel me the name of that pryue stone
And plato aunswerde vnto him anone
Take the stone that Thitanes men name
Which is that quod he magnacia is the same
Sayde plato ye sir is it thus
This is ignotum per ignocius
What is magnacia gode sir I you pray
It is a water that is made I say
Of elementes foure quod plato
Tel me the rote gode sir quod he tho

Of that Water if it be youre wylle
Nay nay quod plato certeyn that I nylle
The philosophers were swore euerichone
That they sholde discouer it to none
Ne in no boke it wryte in no manere
For vnto god it is so leef and dere
For he wol nat that it discoueryd be
But where it lyketh to his deyte
Man to enspire and eke vnto defende
Whan that him lyketh lo this is the ende
Than conclude I thus sithen that god of heuyn
Ne wol nat the philosophers neuyn
How that a man shal come vnto this stone
I rede as for the best let it gone
For who so maketh god his aduersary
As for to worke any thyng in contrary
Of his wylle, neuir shal he thryue
Though that he multiplye terme of his lyue
And there a poynte for endyd is my tale
God sende euery gode man bote of his bale

Here endith the tale of the chanons yeman



Here begynneth the tale of the doctoure of phisyke

t Her was as telleth titus liuyus
A knyght that cleped was virginyus
Fulfilled of honoure and of worthynes
And stronge of frendes and of richesse
A doughter had this knyght by his wyf
No childreyn hadde he mo in al his lyf
Fayre was this mayde of excellent beaute
Aboue euery wight that men myght se
For nature hath with souerayn diligence
Fourmed her in so grete excellence
As though she wolde sayn I nature
Thus can I fourme and peynte a creature
Whan that me lyst who can me contrefete
Pygmaleon nat though he forge and bete
Or graue or peynte for I dar wele sayn
Apelles zanzis sholde worche in veyn
To graue or peynte or forge or bete
If they presumed me to countrefete
For he that is the fourmoure principalle
Hath made me his vycare generalle
To fourme and peynte erthly creatures
Right as me lyst for alle thyng in my cure is
Vndre the mone that may wane and waxe
And for my werke nothyng wol I axe
My lorde and I be fully of accorde
I made her to the worshippe of my lorde
So do I alle myn other creatures
Of what coloures they be or what figures
Thus semyth me that nature wolde say
This mayde was of twelue yere age and twey

In whiche that nature had suche delyte
For right as he can peynte a lyly white
And rody as a rose with suche peynture
She peynted hath this noble creature
Or she was born upon her lymes fre
where as by right suche colours sholde be
And phebus dyde had his dresses grete
Lyke to the stremys of his burnyng hete
And if that excellent was her beaute
A thousand folde more vertuous was she
In her ne lacketh no condicioun
That is to prise as by discrecioun
As wele in body as in gooste chaste was she
For whiche she florede in virgynite
with alle humylite and abstynence
With alle atemperaunce and pacience
With mesure eke and berynge of aray
Discrete she was in aunswerynge alwey
She was as wyse as pallas dare I seyn
Her facunde eke ful womanly and pleyn
None countrefetyd termes hadde she
To seme wyse but after her degre
She spake and alle her wordes more and lesse
Sownynge in vertue and in gentylnesse
Shamefast she was in maydens shamefastnesse
Constant in herte and euir in besynesse
To dryue her oute of ydle slogardye
Bacus hadde of her mouthe no maistrye
For wyne and youthe doth venus encrese
As men in fyre wol caste oyle or grece
And of her owne vertue unconstreyned
She hath ful ofte tymes her seke feyned
For that she wolde flie the company

Where lykely Was to treten of foly
As is at festes reuelles and daunces
That been occasioune of daliaunces
Suche thynges make children for to be
To sone rype and bolde as men may se
Whiche is ful parlous and hath been yore
For ale to sone may she lerne the lore
Of boldnesse whan she is wexen a wyf
And ye maistresses in youre olde lyf
That lordes doughters haue in gouernaunce
Ne takith of my wordes no displesaunce
Thynke that ye been set in gouernynges
Of lordes doughters only for two thynges
Eyther for to haue kept youre honesty
Or elles ye haue fallen in freelte
And knowe Wele ynough the olde daunce
And haue forsake fully myschaunce
For euermore. therfore for cristes sake
To teche them vertue loke that ye nat slake
A theef of bene soun that hath forlast
His licouresnesse and his olde craste
Can kepe a forest best of any man
Now kepe them Wele for and ye Wol ye can
Loketh Wele to no vyce that ye assent
Lest ye dampned be for youre euyl entent
For who so doth a traytoure is certayn
And takith hede of that I shalle seyn
Of alle treason souerayn pestilence
Is Whan a wight betrayeth innocence
Ye faders and ye moders eke also
Though ye haue children be it one or mo
Youre is the charge of alle theire surueyaunce
Whiles they been vndre youre gouernaunce

Beware if by ensamples of youre lyuyng
Or by youre negligence in chastysyng
That they ne perysshe for I dare wele sey
If that they doo ye shal it dere abeye
Vndre a shipherde soft and negligent
The wolf hath many a shepe and lambe to rent
Suffiseth ensamples ynough as here
For I must turne ayen to my matere
This mayde of which I telle expresse
She kept her self she nedyd no maystresse
For in her lyuyng maydens myght rede
As in a boke euery gode word in dede
That longith to a mayde vertuous
She was so prudent and so bountevous
For whiche the fame oute sprong on euery syde
Both of her bounte and of her beaute wyde
That through the londe they prysse her echone
That loued vertue saue enuy alone
That sory is of other mennys wele
And glade is of his sorowe and vnhele
This doctoure makith this discripcioun
This mayde on a day went to the toun
Towarde the temple with her modre dere
As is of yong maydens the manere
Now was there a iustice in the toun
That gouernoure was of that regioun
And so befyl this iuge his eyn cast
Vpon this mayde auysyng her ful fast
As she camforth by there the iuge stode
Anone his herte chaunged and his mode
So was he caught with beaute of this mayde
And to him self ful pryuely he sayde
This mayde shalbe myn for any man

Anone the feende into his herte ran
And taughte him sodenly by what slight
The mayden to his purpos wynne he myght
For certis by no force ne by no mede
Him thoughte he was nat able for to spede
For she was stronge of frendes and eke she
Confermyd was in suche souerayn beaute
That wele he wyst he myght her nat wynne
As for to make her with her body to synne
For whiche with grete deliberacioun
He sent after a chorle was in the toun
The whiche he knewe ful subtil and ful bolde
This iuge vnto this chorle his tale hath tolde
In secrete wyse and made him to assure
He sholde telle it to no creature
And if he dyd he sholde lese his hede
Whan assentyd was this cursed dede
Glade was the iuge and made glade chere
And yaue him yeftes precious and dere
Whan shapen was al this conspiracy
From poynte to poynte how that his lycherye
Parfourmed sholde be ful subtelly
As ye shalle here it after alle openly
Home goth this chorle that hight claudyus
This false iuge that hight Appius
So was his name for it is no fable
But knowen for an historyal thyng notable
The sentence of it soth is oute of doute
This false iuge goth now fast aboute
To haste his delyte alle that he may
And so befyl sone after on a day
This false iuge as telleth vs the story
As he was wont sat in his consistory

And yaue his domes vpon sondry caas
This false chorle cam forth a ful grete paas
And sayd lord if it be youre wylle
As doth me right vpon my pytous bylle
In whiche I pleyne vpon virginyus
And if he wol say it is nat thus
I wyl preue it and fynde gode wytnesse
That soth is that my bylle wol expresse
The iuge aunswerd of this in his absence
I may nat yeue diffinyte sentence
Lete do calle him and I wol gladly here
Thou shalt haue right and no wrong here
Virginyus cam to here the iustice wylle
And right anone was redde this cursed bylle
The sentence was therof as ye shal here
To you my lord Appyus so dere
Shewith youre poure seruaunt Claudius
How that a knyght callyd virginyus
Ayenst the lawe and ayenst alle equyte
Holdith expresse ayenst the wyl of me
My seruaunt. whiche that is my thralle by right
Whiche from myn house was stolen on a nyght
Whiles she was fulle yong I wol it preue
By wytnes lord so that ye nat greue
She nys nat his doughter What so he' say
Wherfore my lorde iustice I you pray
yelde me my thralle if it be youre wylle
Lo this was alle the sentence of this bylle
Virginyus gan vpon the chorle beholde
But hastely or he his tale tolde
He wolde a defendyd it as sholde a knyght
And by wytnesse of many a trewe wight
That alle was false that sayd his aduersary

This cursed iuge wolde no lengere tary
Ne here a worde more of virgynyus
But yaue his iugement and sayde thus
I deme anone this chorle his seruaunt haue
Thou shalt no lengere in thy house her saue
Go sette her forth and put her in oure warde
This chorle shal haue his thralle thus I awarde
And whan this worthy knyght virginyus
Through sentence of the iuge appius
Must by force his dere doughter yeuyn
Unto the iuge in lycherye to lyuen
He goth him home and set him in his halle
And lete anone his dere doughter calle
And with a face ded as asshes colde
Upon her humble face he gan beholde
With faders pyte stykyng through his herte
Al wol he nat from his purpos conuerte
Doughter quod he virginea by the name
Ther been two weyes other deth or shame
That thou must suffre allas that I was boze
For neuir thou deseruyst wherfore
To dye with a swerde or with a knyf
O dere doughter whiche that alle my lyf
I haue fostryd by with suche plesaunce
That thou ne were oute of my remembraunce
O doughter whiche that my last wo
And in my lyf my last ioy also
O gemme of chastite in pacience
Take thou thy deth for this is my sentence
For loue and nat for hate thou must be dede
My pytous honde must smyte of thy hede
Allas that euir appyus the sey
Thus hath he iuged the to day

And tolde her al the caas as ye bifore
Haue herd it nedith to telle it no more
O mercy dere fadre quod the mayde
And with that worde she bothe her armes leyd
Aboute his necke as she was wont to do
The terys brast out of her eyen two
And sayd gode fadre shal I dye
Is ther no grace is ther no remedy
Nay certis dere doughter myn quod he
Than yeue me leue fader myn quod she
My deth to compleyne a lytel space
For parde Jepte paue his doughter grace
For to compleyne or he her slow allas
And god it wote nothyng was her trespas
But that she ran her fader for to se
To welcome him with grete solempnite
And with that worde she fyl a swoune anoon
And after whan her swounyng was agone
She ryseth vp and to her fader sayde
Blyssed be god that I shalle dye a mayde
yef me my deth or that I haue a shame
Doth with youre childe youre wylle a goddes name
And with that word she prayeth ful ofte
That with his swerde he sholde smyte softe
And with that worde a swoun doune she fyl
Her fader with a soroufulle herte and wylle
Her hede of smote and by the top it hent
And to the iuge he yaue it in present
As he sat yet in dome in in consistory
Whan that the iuge it sawe as sayth the story
He badde take him and hange him also fast
But right anone alle the people in thraste
To saue the knyght for routhe and for pyte

For knowen was the fals iniquyte
The people anon hadde suspecte in this thyng
By maner of this chorles chalengyng
That it was by assent of Appius
They wyst wele that he was lecherous
Forth with vnto this appius they gone
And cast him in pryson and that anone
Where as he slow him self and claudyus
That seruaunt was vnto this Appius
Was demyd for to be hanged vpon a tre
But virgynuys of his grete pyte
So prayed for him that he was exiled
And elles certis hadde he be begyled
The remenaunt were hongred both more and lesse
That consentyd were to this cursednesse
Here may ye se how synne hath his meryte
Be ware for no man wote how god wol smyte
In no degre ne in no maner wyse
The worme of conscience may ynough agryse
Of wycked lyf thoughe it so pryue be
That no man wote of but god and he
Whether that he be lewde man or lerned
He noot how sone he may be aferyd
Therfore I rede you this counceyl take
For sake synne or synne you forsake

Here endith the phisicyens tale
And begynneth the wordes of the hoost

O Vre hoost gan swere as he were wode
Harow quod he by nayles and by blode
This was a fals theef a cursed iustyse
As shamefulle deth as herte can deuyse

The prologue of the Pardonere

Come to thise fals iuges and theire aduocates
Allas this sely mayde is slayn allas
Allas to dere abought she her beaute
Wherfore I say that alle men may se
That yeftes of fortune and of nature
Been cause of deth of many a creature
Her beaute was her deth I dar wele seyn
Allas so pytously as she was slayn
But herof wol I nat procede as now
Men haue ful ofte more harme than prow
But truly myn owne mayster dere
This is a pytous tale for to here
But nedirthelesse passe ouir is no force
I pray to god so saue thy gentyl corps
And thyn brynales and thy iourdeyns
Thyn ypocras and eke thy galiens
And euery boyst fulle of lectuary
God blisse them al and oure lady seint mary
So moot I the thou art a propyr man
And lyke a prelate by seint dampan
Thou hast spoke ynough I can nat sey in terme
But wele I wote thou makyst my herte to erne
That I almoost haue caught a cardyacle
By corpus dominus but if I haue tryacle
Or elles a draughte of corny moyst ale
Or but I here anon a mery tale
My herte is lost for pyte of this mayde
Thou bela my thou Johy pardonere he sayd
Tel vs som myrthes or iapes right anoon
It shalbe do he sayde by seint Runyon
But first quod he here at this ale stake
I wol bothe drynke and ete of a cake
But right anoon these gentylles began to cry

The prologue of the Pardoner

Nay let him telle vs of no rebaudrye
Tel vs som mozalle thyng that we may lere
Som wyt and than wol we gladely here
I graunte ywys quod he but I must thynke
Vpon som honest thyng whiles that I drynke

Here endith the wordes of the hoost
And begynneth the pardoners prologue

Lordynges quod he in chirche whan I preche
I peyne me to haue an hauntey speche
And ryngē it oute as rounde as goth a belle
For I can by rote alle that I telle
My teme is euir one and alwey was
Radix omnium malorum est cupiditas
First I pronounce whens that I come
And than my bulles shewe I alle and some
Our lige lordes seale on my patent
That shewe I first my body to warrent
That no man be so bolde ne preest ne clerke
Me to distroube of cristes holy werke
And after that telle I forth my tales
Bulles of popes and cardynales
Of patriarkes and bysshoppes I shewe
And in latyn I spekē wordes a fewe
To saffron with my predicacioun
And for to stere men to deuocioun
Thenne shewe I forth my longe cristalle stones
Ycrammed in cloutes fulle of bones
Relykes they been as wene they echone
Than haue I in latoun a sholder bone
Which that was of an holy iewys shepe
Gode men say I take of my wordes kepe

If that this boon be wasshe in any welle.
If nowe or calf shepe or oy swelle
That any wourme hath ete or him stonge
Take water of this welle and wasshe his tonge
And it is hole anone. and ferthermore
Of pockes and of scabbes and euery sore
Shalle euery shepe be hole that of this welle
Drynketh a draught take kepe of that I telle
If that the gode man that the bestes owyth
Wol euery weke or that the cok crowyth
Fastyng drynke of this welle a draughte
As that olde lewe our eldres taughte
His bestes and his store shal multiply
And sires also it helpeth ielousye
And though a man be falle in ielous rage
Let make with this water his potage
And neuer shal he more his wyf mystryste
Though he in soth the defaute by her wyst
Al hadde she take prestys two or thre
Here is a metayn eke that ye may se
He that his honde wol put in this metayn
He shal haue multiplyenge of his grayn
Whan he hath sowen be it whete or otys
So that he offre pens or elles grotys
Gode men and women one thyng warne I you
If any wyght be in the chirche now
That hath done synne so orrible that he
Dar nat for shame shryuen be
Or any woman be she yonge or olde
That hath ymade her husbonde cokewolde
Suche folke shalle haue no power ne grace
To offre to my relykes in this place
And who so fyndeth them oute of suche blame

Comyth vp and offre in goddes name
And I assoyle them by the auctorite
Suche as by bulle was graunted to me
By this gaude haue I wonne many a yere
An hundred marke sithen I was pardonere
I stond lyke a clerke in my pulpet
And whan le wde people be doun y set
I preche so as ye haue herd bifore
And telle an hundred false iapes more
Than peyne I me to stretche forth my neche
And est and west vpon the people I beche
As doth a doue sittyng vpon a berne
Myn hondes and my tongte goth so yerne
That it is iope to se my besynesse
Of auarice and of suche cursydnesse
Is alle my prechyng to make them fre
To yeue theire pens and namely vnto me
For myn entent is nat but for to wynne
And nothyng for correccioun of synne
I reche nat whan that they be beryed
Though theire soules gone a blakeberied
For certis fulle many a predicacioun
Sowneth ofte tyme of cuyl entencioun
Som for plesaunce of folke and for flatery
To been anaunsed by ypocrysy
And som for veyne glorye and som for hate
For whan I dare not other weyes debate
Than wol I stynge them with my tongt smert
In prechyng so that they shalle nat astert
To be diffamed falsely if that he
Hath trespaced other to my brethern or to me
For though I telle nat his propre name
Men shalle wele knowe that it is the same

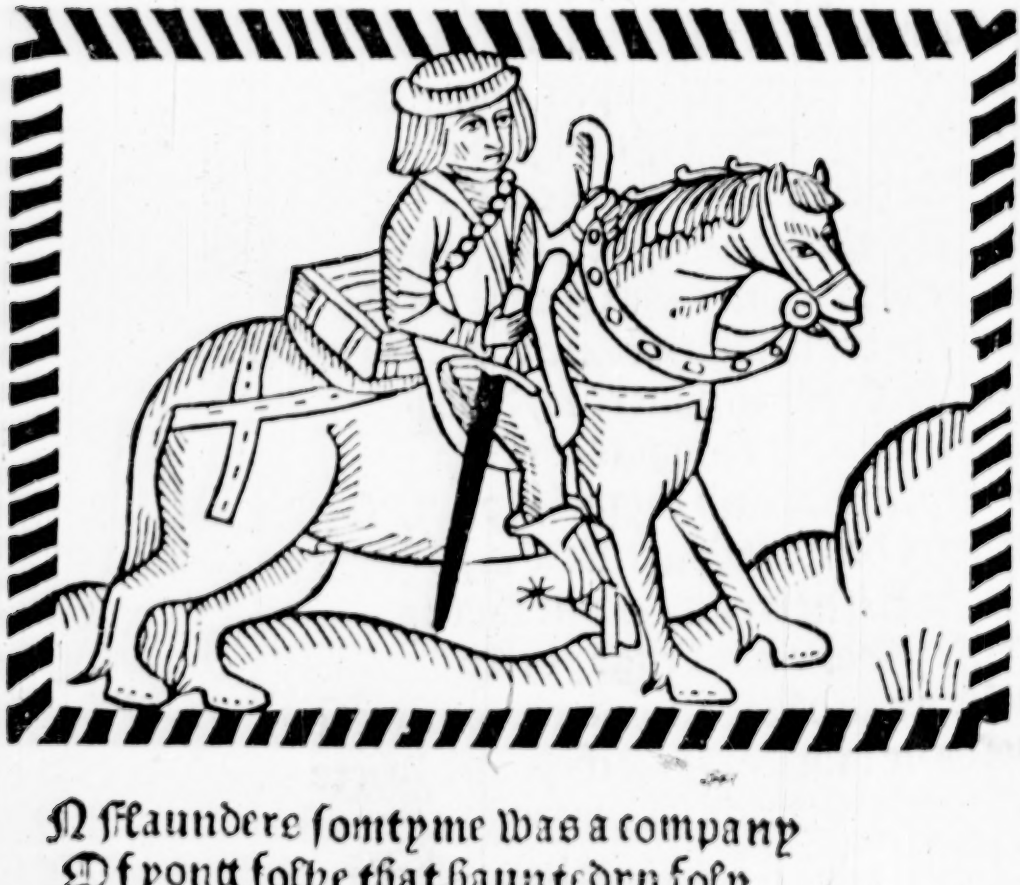
The prologue of the Pardonere

By ſynes or by other circumſtaunces
Thus quyte I folke that doth vs displeasaunces
Thus ſpytte I oute my venym vnder hewe
Of holyneſſe to ſeme holy and trewe
But ſhortly myn entent I wol deuyſe
I preche of no thyng but of couetyſe
Therfore my teame is and euir was
Radix omnium malorum eſt cupiditas
Thus can I preche the ſame vyce
To ſuche as be vſyng the ſynne of auarice
But though my ſelf be gylty in that ſynne
yet can I make other folke to twynne
from auarice, and ſore them to repente
But that is nat my pryncipalle entente
I preche no thyng but for couetyſe
Of this matere it ought ynough ſuffiſe
Than telle I them enſamples many oon
Of olde ſtoryes long tyme agoon
For lewde people loue tales olde
Whiche thynges can they wele reporte and holde
What trow ye whiles that I may preche
And for to wynne golde and ſyluer for to teche
That I wol lyue in pouert wylfully
Nay nay I neuir thoughte it truly
For I wol preche and begge in ſondry londes
I wyl nat do no labour with myn hondes
Ne make baſkettes and lyue therby
Bicauſe I wolde nat begge ydelly
I wolle none of the apoſteles countrefete
I wol haue money, wolle chese and whete
Alle were it yeuen of the poureſt page
Or of the poureſt wydowe in a vyllage
Al ſholde her children ſterue for famyn

The prologue of the Pardoner

Nay I wol drynke the licoure of the wyn
And haue a ioly wenche in euery toun
But herkneth lordynges in conclusioun
youre lykyng is that I must telle a tale
Now I haue dronke a draughte of corny ale
By god I hope I shalle telle you a thyng
That shalle by reason be at youre lykyng
For though my self be a ful vicious man
A moralle tale yet I you telle can
Whiche I am wont for to preche and also wynne
Now holde youre peas my tale I wol begynne

Here endith the pardoners prologue
And begynneth his tale



I N flaundres somtyme was a company
Of yong folke that haunted dry foly
As ryotte hazarde stewys and tauernys

Where as With harpes lutes and gyternes
They daunce and pley at the dyce both day & nyght
And etyn also and drynken aboue their myght
Thrugh Whiche they done the deuyl sacrifice
Within the deuylles temple in cursed Wyse
The superfluytees abhominable
Their othes be so grete and so damnable
That it is gryselp for to here them swere
Oure blyssed lordes body they to tere
Them thought the iewys rent him nat ynough
And eche of them at others synne lough
And right anone cam in the tomblesterys
Fetys and smale and yong frutesterys
Syngers With harpes Bawdes Wafrerys
Suche as been verry the deuylles officerys
To kyndel and blowe the fyres of lycherp
That is annexed vnto glotony
The holy Wryte take I to Wytnesse
That lycherp is in Wyne and in dronkenesse
Lo how that dronkyn loth vnkyndely
Lay by his doughters two vnWetyngly
So dronke he Was he nyst What he Wrought
And therfore sore repente him ought
Herodis Who so Wyl the storyes seche
There may he lerne and by ensample teche
Whan he of Wyne Was replete at the fest
Right at his owne table yaue his heest
To sle the Baptyst John ful gyltles
Seneke sayth eke gode Wordes doutles
He sayth he can no difference fynde
Betwix a man that is oute of his mynde
And a man Whiche that is dronkelewe
But that Wodenes falleth in a shrewe

Perſeuereth lengere than doth dronkneſſe
Dute glotony ful of curſedneſſe
D cauſe firſt of oure confuſioun
D origynalle ſynne of oure dampnacioun
Tyl criſte hadde bought vs with his blode agayn
Lo how dere ſhortly for to ſeyn
A bought was this curſed velony
Corrupte was al this worlde through glotony
Adam oure forn fadre and his wyf alſo
Fro paradiſe to labour and to wo
Were dreuyn for that vyce it is no drede
For whiles that Adam faſtyd as J rede
He was in paradiſe and whan that he
Ete of the frute defended on the tre
Anone he was oute caſt to woo and peyne
D glotony on the ought vs wele to pleyne
D wyſt a man how many maledies
Folowe of exceſſe and of glotonyes
He ſholde be the more meſurable
Of his dyette ſyttyng at his table
Alas the ſhorte throte the tendre mouthe
Maketh that eſt and weſt north and ſouthe
In erthe in eyre in water men to ſwynke
To gete a glotoun deynte mete and drynke
D poule of this matere wele canſt thou entrete
Mete vnto wombe and wombe eke vnto mete
Shal god diſtroye bothe as poule ſeyth
Alas a foule thyng it is by feyth
To ſay this worde and fouler is the dede
Whan men ſo drynketh of the whyte and rede
That of his throte he maketh his pryue
Through that curſed ſuperfluyte
The appoſtel weppyng ſayth ful pytouſly

Ther walkyn many of whiche you tolde haue I
I say it now wepyng with pytous voyce
That they been enymeys of cristes croyce
Of whiche the ende is deth wombe is their god
O wombe o bely o stynkyng cod
Fulfylled of donge and of corrupcioun
At eyther ende of the foule is the soun
How grete cost and laboure is the to fynde
These cokes. how they stampe streyne and grynde
And turne substaunce into accident
To fulfylle alle thy lycorous talent
Out of the harde bones knokyn they
The mary for they cast naught away
That may go through the goret soft and sote
Of spicery of leuys barke and rote
Shal be his sauce y made by delyte
To make him yet a newe appetyte
But certes he that haunteth suche delices
Is dede whiles that he lyueth in the vyces
Alycherous thyng is wyne. and dronkenes
Is full of stryuyng and of wrechidnes
O dronkey man disfigured is thy face
Soure is thy brethe foule art thou to embrace
And through thy dronkey nose sowneth thy soun
As though thou saydest ay sampson sampson
And yet god wote sampson dranke neuir no wyne
Thou fauyst as it were a stycked swyne
Thy tong is lost and alle thyn honest cure
For dronkenesse is verry sepulture
Of mannys wytte and his discrecioun
In whom that drynke hath dominacioun
He can no counseyl kepe it is no drede
Now kepe you fro the white and fro the rede

Namely fro the whyte wyne of lepe
That is to selle in brydge strete or in chepe
This wyne of spayne crepith subtelly
In other wynes growyng fast by
Of whiche ther riseth suche fumosite
That whan a man hath dronke draughtes thre
And wenyth that he be at home in chepe
He is in spayne right at the toun of lepe
Nat at rochel ne at burdeux toun
And than wol he say sampsoun sampsoun
But herkneth lordynges one worde I you pray
That alle the soverayne actes dar I say
Of victorye in the olde testament
Through verry god that is omnipotent
Were doon in abstynence and in prayer
Loketh the byble and there ye may it lere
Loketh Attylla the grete conqueroure
Deyed in his slepe with shame and dishonoure
Bledyng ay at his nose in dronkenesse
A capdeyne shulde lyve in sobirnesse
And ouir alle this auyse you right wele
What was comaunded vnto lamuele
Nat samuel but lamuel say I
Redith the byble and fynde it expresselly
Of wyne yevyng to them that have iustice
Nomore of this for it may suffice
And now that I have spoke of glotony
Now wol I defende you hasardry
Hasardry is verry modre of lesynges
And of disceyte and cursed swerynges
Blaspheme of criste manslaughter and waste also
Of catel and of tyme and ferthermo
It is repreef and contrary of honoure

For to be holden a comon hasardoure
And euir the higher that he is in estate
The more he is holden desolate
If that a prynce vse hasardry
In alle gouernaunce and alle policye
He is as by comon opynyon
Yholde the lasse in reputacioun
Stylbone that was holde a wyse enbassedoure
Was sent into corynthe with grete honoure
Fro calidon to make them alliaunce
And whan he cam him happyd this chaunce
That alle the gretest that were of that londe
Pleyng at the hasard he them fonde
For whiche as sone as that it myght be
He stale him home ayen to his countre
And sayde there wyl I nat lese my name
I wol nat take on me so grete defame
you for alye to none hasardours
Sendith other wyse enbassadoures
For by my trouthe me were lyuer dye
Than I you to hasardoures shulde allye
For ye that been so glorious in honours
Shalle nat alye you to no hasardours
As by my wylle ne as by my tretye
To this wyse philosopher thus sayd he
Lokke che thou to the kyng demetrius
The kyng of parthes as the bokke sayth vs
Send him a peyre of dyce of golde in scorne
For he hadde vsed hasarde ther bifore
For whiche he helde his glory and his renoun
At no value or reputacioun
Lordes myght fynde othermanez pley
Honest ynough to dryue the day awey

Now wol I speke of othes false and grete
A worde or two as many bokes trete
Grete swerynge is a thynge abhomynable
And false swerynge is a thynge more reprouable
The highe god forbade swerynge at alle
Wytnesse of Mathew but in specialle
Of swerynge sayth holy Jeromy
Thou shalt swere soth thyn othes and nat lye
But swere in dome and in right wysnesse
But ydel swerynge is a cursydnesse
Beholde and se that in the first table
Of the highe goddes hestis honourable
How that the seconde heest of him is this
Take nat my name in ydelnesse amys
Lo rather he forbedith suche swerynge
Than homycide or any other cursed thynge
I say as by ordre thus it stondith
This knowe they that his heestys vnderstondeth
How that the seconde heest of god is that
And ferthermore I wol the telle at plat
That vengeaunce shalle nat parte from the house
That of his othes is to outrageous
Ey by goddes precious hert and his nayles
And by the blode of criste that is hayles
Seuyn is my chaunce and thyn is synke and trey
Ey goddes armes if thou falsly pley
This daggar shalle through thyn herte go
This fruyte comyth of the beched bones two
For swerynge ire falsnesse and homycide
Now for the loue of criste that for vs deyde
Letyth youre othes bothe grete and smale
For cristes sake and herkneth my tale
These ryottouzes thre of whiche I telle

Long or to pryme Were rong any Belle
Were set them in a tauerne to drynke
And as they sat they herd a Belle clynke
Bifore a cors Were caried to his graue
That one of them gan calle to his knaue
Go bet quod he and aske redily
What corps is this that passeth forth hye
And looke that thou reporte his name Wele
Sir quod the Boy it nedith neuir a dele
It Was me tolde or ye cam here two oures
He Was parde an olde felowe of youres
And sodenly Was he slayn to nyght
For dronke as he sat on his benche vpright
There cam a preuy thief men clepe deth
That in this countre alle the people sleth
And With his spere he smote his herte atwo
And Went his Wey Without Wordes moo
He hath a thousand slayn this pestilence
And mayster or ye come in his presence
Me thynketh it Were necessary
For to be Ware of such an aduersary
Deth is redy for to mete him euirmore
Thus taught me my dame I say no more
A seint mary sayd this tauernere
The childe sayth soth for he hath this yere
Hens ouir a myle slayn in a grete village
Bothe man and woman childe hyne and page
I trowe his habitacion be there
To be auysed grete Wysdome it Were
Or that he dyd a man a dishonoure
Ye goddes armes sayde this ryottoure
Is it such peryl With him for to mete
I shalle him seke by Wey and eke by strete

I shalle him sle by goddes digne bones
Herkyn felowes we be thre alle onys
Let eche of vs become others brother
And eche of vs holde by his honde to other
And we wol sle this traytoure deth
He shal be slayn he that so many sleth
By goddes dignyte or it be nyght
Togydder haue these thre theire trouthes plight
Tolyue and dy eche of them with other
As though he were his owne borne brother
And vp they stert alle dronke in this rage
And forth they gone toward that vyllage
Of whiche the tauernez hath spoke bifory
And many a grysly othe haue they swory
And cristes blissed body they to rent
Deth shalbe ded if that he may be hent
Whan they haue goon nat fully a myle
Right as they wolde haue gone ouir a style
An olde man and a poure with them mette
This olde man ful mekely them grette
And sayd thus lordynges god you se
The proudest of these riottoures thre
Answerd what chorle with harde grace
Why art thou alle forwrapped saue thy face
Why lyuest thou so long in so grete age
This olde man gan loke in theire vysage
And sayde thus for I can nat fynde
A man though I walke into ynde
Neythez in cyte ne in vyllage
That wol chaunge his youthe for myn age
And therfore must I haue myn age stylle
As long tyme as it is goddes wylle
Ne deth alas wol nat haue my lyf

Thus walke I lyke a restles caytyf
And on the grounde Whiche is my moders gate
I knoke With my staf erly and late
And say to her leue modre let me in
Lo how I vanysshe flesshe blode and skyn
Alas Whan shalle my bones be at rest
Moder With you Wolde I chaunge my cheste
That in my chambre long tyme hath be
Ye for an heize cloute to Wrappe in me
But yet to me ye Wol nat do that grace
For Whiche ful pale and Wrechyd is my face
And sires to you it is no curtesy
To speke to an olde man vylony
But he trespace other in Worde or dede
In ensample take all holy Wryte rede
Ayenst an olde man hoze vpon his hede
Ye shulde aryse Wherfore I you zede
Ne doth to none olde man harme now
Nomoze than ye Wolde men dyd to you
In age if ye shulde longe abyde
And god be With you Where ye go or ryde
I must go thider as I haue to do
Nay olde chorle by god thou shalt nat so
Sayde this other hasardoure anoon
Thou partest nat so lyghtly by seint John
Thou spakest right now of that traytoure deth
That in this countre alle oure frendes sleth
Haue here my trouthe thou arte his aspy
Tel Where he is or thou shalt it aby
By god and by the holy sacrement
For shortly thou arte one of his assent
To sle vs yonge folke thou fals theef
Now sires quod he if it be youre leef

To fynde deth turne by this croked wey
For in this groue I him saw last by my fey
Vndre a tre and there he wol abyde
For poure boost he wol no thyng him hyde
Se ye that oke right there ye shal him fynde
God saue you that boughte agayn manhynde
And you amende thus sayd this olde man
And euery of these ryottoures ran
Tyl they came to the tre and there they fonde
Of floreyns fyne golde y coyned rounde
Wele nygh an eyght bussheles as them thought
No lenger than after deth they soughte
But eche of them so glade was of that sight
For that the floreyns so faire were and bright
That they sat by the preciousharde
The worst of them he spake the first worde
Brethery quod he take hede what I say
My wytte is grete though that I bourd and pley
This tresoure hath fortune vnto vs yeuen
In myrthe and iolite oure lyf to lyuen
And lyghtly as it comyth so wol we spende
Ey goddes precious dignite who wende
To day that we shold haue so fayre a grace
But myght this golde be caried fro this place
Home to my house and eke vnto youres
Than myght we say that it were al oures
Than were we in high felicite
But truly by day it may nat be
Men wolde say that we were theuys strong
And for oure owne tresoure doon vs hong
This tresoure must be caried by nyght
As wysely and as slily as it myght
Wherfore I rede let lotte amonges vs alle

Drawe cutte let se where that it wol falle
He that hath the shorteste cutte with hert blythe
Shal renne to towne and that fulle swythe
To brynge vs brede and wyne fulle pryuely
And two of vs shalle kepe fulle subtelly
This treasoure wele and if he wol nat tarye
Whan it is nyght we wol this treasour carye
By one assent where as vs lyst best
That one of them brought strawe in his fist
And bad them drawe and loke whom on it wold fal
And it felle on the yongest of them alle
And forth towarde the towne he went anon
And also sone as he was goon
That one of them spake thus vnto that other
Thou woteste wele thou art my sworen brother
Thy prouffyt wol I telle the right anoon
Thou woste wele that oure felawe is goon
And here is golde and that ful grete plente
That shalbe departed amonges vs thre
But natheles if I can shape it so
That it departed were amonges vs two
Hadde I nat doon a frendes turne to the
That other answerd I not how it myght be
I wote wele the golde shalbe oures two
What shal we say what shalle we do
Shalle it be conceyle sayd the first shrewe
And I shal telle the in wordes fewe
What we shalle do and brynge it wele aboute
I graunte quod that other oute of doute
That by my trouthe I wol the nat bewrey
Now quod he thou woteste wele we be two
And two ynne of vs shal strenger be than one
Loke whan that he is set thou right anone

Arise as thoughe thou wolde ſt with him pley
And J ſhalle him ryue throughe the ſydes twey
Whiles thou ſtrogeleſt with him in game
And with thy daggez loke thou do the ſame
Than ſhalle alle this golde departed be
My dere frende betwyte me and the
Than may we bothe oure luſtes fulfylle
And pley at the dyce right at oure owne wylle
And thus accozded be these thre wys twey
To ſley the thridde as ye haue herd me ſay
This pongeſt whiche that went to the toun
Full ofte in hert he rolleth vp and doun
The beaute of these flozeyns newe and bright
O lozde quod he if so were that J myght
Al this treſoure wynne to my ſelf allone
Ther nys no may that lyueth vndre trone
Of god that ſholde lyue as mery as J
And at the laſt the feende oure enemy
Put in his herte that he ſholde poyſon bey
With whiche he myght ſle his felawes twey
Foz why the fend fonde him in ſuche lyuyng
That he hadde leue him in ſozowe to bryng
Foz this was vtterly his entent
To ſle them bothe and neuir to repent
And forth he goth ne lengere wolde he tary
Into the toun vnto an apotecary
And prayed him that he wolde him ſelle
Som poyſon that he myght his rattes quelle
And eke therwith was a polcat in his hawe
That as he ſayd his capones hadde y ſlawe
And ſayde he wolde wreke him if he myght
Of vermyn that diſtroyed him by nyght
The apotecary aunſwerd thou ſhalt haue

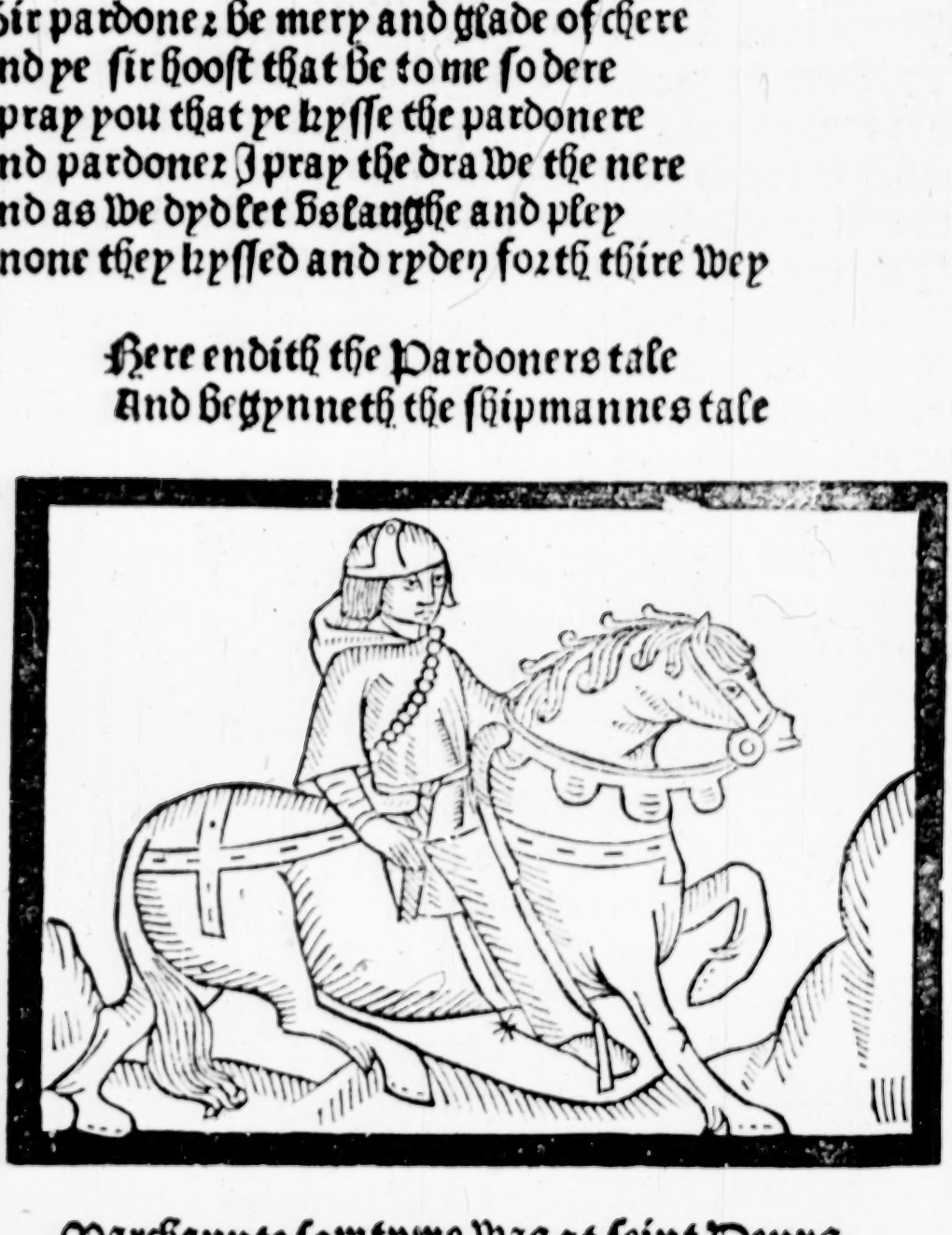
A thyng as wysely god my soule saue
In alle this worlde ther is no creature
That ete and drynke of this confecture
Nat but the mountenaunce of a corne of whete
That he ne shal anoon his lyf forlete
ye sterue he shalle and that in lasse while
Or thou wylt go passyng half a myle
This poyson is so strong and so vyolent
This cursed man hath in his herte it hent
This poyson in a boye and sithen he ran
Into the neyte strete vnto a man
And borowed him large botelles thre
And into the tweyn the poyson poured he
The thridde he kepte clene for his drynke
For al nyghte he shope him for to swynke
In caryyng of this golde oute of this place
And whan this ryottoure with sory grace
Hadde fylled with wyne his grete botelles thre
To his felawes ayen repayreth he
What nedith it to sermone of it more
For right as they hadde cast his deth afore
Right so they haue him slayn right anoon
And whan this was done than spake that one
Now let vs sytte and drynke and make vs mery
And after warde we wol his body bery
And after warde it happyd them pe caas
To take the botel there the poyson was
And dronke and yaue his felawe drynke also
For whiche anone they storuyn bothe two
But certis I suppose that Auicene
Wrote neuir in no canoun ne in no fenne
More wondre sorowes of enpoysonyng
Than hadde these wreches two in their endyng

Thus endyd been these homycides two
And eke the false enpoysonez also
O cursed syn fulle of cursidnesse
O traytoures homycide o wyckednesse
O glotony oluxury o hasardry
Thou blasphemez of crist with velony
And othes grete of vsage and of pryde
Allas mankynde how may it betyde
That to thy creatour whiche that the wrought
And with his precious blode the bought
Thou art so false and so vnkynde allas
Now gode men god forzeue you youz trespas
And ware you from the synne of auarice
Myn holy pardoun may you alle warice
So that ye offre nobles oz sterlinges
Oz elles siluez spones broches oz rynges
Bowith youre hede vndre these holy bulles
Comyth vp ye wyues offreth of youre wolles
youz names I entze in my rolle anoon
ynto the blisse of heuyn shalle ye goon
I you assoyle by my hight powez
you that wol offze as clene and as clere
As ye were boze lo sires thus I preche
And Jesu crist that is oure soules leche
So graunte you his pazdon to resceyue
Foz that is best I wol you nat deceyue
But sires o wozde forgate I in my tale
I haue relykes and pazdon in my male
As fayze as any man in englonde
Whiche weze me yeue by the popes honde
If any of you wol of deuocioun
Offre and haue myn absolucioun
Comyth forth anoon and knelith heze adoun

And mekely receyueth youre pardon
Or elles taketh pardon as ye wende
Alle newe and freſſhe at euery myles ende
So that ye offre alwey newe and newe
Nobles or pens whiche that been gode and trewe
It is an honoure to euerichе that is here
That ye may haue a ſufficient pardoneре
To aſſoyle you in countre as ye ryde
For auentures whiche that may betyde
For parauenture ther may falle one or two
Doun of his horſe and breke his necke a two
Loke whiche a ſurete it is to you alle
That I am in youre felauſhip yfalle
That may aſſoyle you bothe moре and laſſe
Whan that the ſoule ſhalle from the body paſſe
I rede that oure hooſt here ſhalle begynne
For he is mooſt enuoluped in ſynne
Come forth ſir hooſt and offreth here anone
And thou ſhalt kyſſe the reliкes euerichone
Ye for a grote vnbocle anone thy purſe
Nay nay quod he than haue I criſtes curſe
Let be quod he it ſhal nat be ſo theche
Thou woldeſt make me to kyſſe thyn olde breche
And ſithe it were a relyke of a ſeint
Thoughe it were with thy fundement ypeynte
But by that croce whiche that ſeint eleyn fonde
I wolde I hadde thy coylons in myn honde
In ſtede of relykes ethеr of ſeynte wary
Let cutte them of I wol helpe the them to cary
They ſhal be ſhryned in an hoggеs tord
This pardoneр aunſwerd nat a word
So wroth he was he wolde no worde ſay
Now quod oure hooſt I wol no lengere pley

With the ne With none other angry man
But right anone the worthy knyght began
Whan that he sawe that alle the people lough
No more of this for this is right ynough
Sir pardoner be merry and glade of chere
And ye sir hoost that be to me so dere
I pray you that ye kysse the pardonere
And pardoner I pray the drawe the nere
And as we dydlet beslaughe and pley
Anone they kyssed and ryden forth thire wey

Here endith the Pardoners tale
And begynneth the shipmannes tale



A Marchaunte somtyme was at seint Denys
That riche was therfore men helde him wyse
A wyf he hadde of excellent beaute
And compenable and reuelous was she

Whiche is a thyng that cauſeth moze diſpence
Than Wozth is alle the chere and reuerence
That men them doon at feſtes and at daunces
Suche ſalutaciouns and countenaunces
Paſſen as doth a ſhadowe on a Walle
But Wo is him that pay muſt foz alle
The ſely huſbond algate he muſt paye
He muſt bs bothe clothe and eke arzay
Alle foz his owne Wozſhip fulle richely
In Whiche arzay We daunſe iolily
And if that he nought pay parauenture
Dzelles lyſt nat ſuche ſpences endure
But thynketh it is Waſtyd and y loſt
Than muſt a nothez pay foz oure coſt
Dzlene bs gode and that is parlous
This noble marchaunt helde a noble houſe
foz Whiche he hadde ſo grete repeyre
foz his largenes and foz his Wyf Was fayre
That Wondre Was but herkneth to my tale
Amonge alle theſe geſtes gret and ſmale
Ther Was a monke a fayre man and a bolde
I trowe that threty Wyntez he Was olde
That euir in one Was dra Wyng to that place
This yong monke that Was ſo fayre of face
Aqueynted Was ſo With the gode man
Sithen that their firſt knowlege began
That in his houſe as famyliez Was he
As it is poſſible any frende to be
But foza ſmoche as this gode man
And eke this monke of Whiche I began
Were bothe two born in one byllatte
The monke him claymeth as foz coſynatte
And he ayen ſayth nat onys nay

But was as glade therof as foule of day
For to his herte it was a grete plesaunce
Thus been they knytte with etery alliaunce
And eche of them gan other for to ensure
Of brotherhede while that their lyf may dure
Free was dan John and namely of dispence
As in that house and fulle of diligence
To doon plesaunce and also grete costage
He nat forgate to yeue the leest page
In alle that house but after his degre
He yaue the lord and also his menye
Whan that he cam som manere honest thyng
For whiche they were as glade of his comyng
As foule is fayn when the sonne vp riseth
Nomore of this for it suffiseth
But so befyl this marchaunte on a day
Shope him to make redy his array
Toward the toun of Bruges for to fare
To by there a porcioun of Ware
For whiche he hadde to parys sent anon
A messangere and prayed hath dan John
That he sholde come to seint denys and pley
With him and his wyf a day or two
Or he to Bruges went and alle wyse
This noble monke the whiche I you deuyse
Hath of his abbot as him lyst licence
Bicause he was a man of high prudence
And eke an officere oute for to ryde
To se their graunges and their berys wyde
And to seint denys comyth him anone
Who was so welcome as my lorde dan John
Dure dere cosyn fulle of curtesy
With him he broughte a jub of malueesy

And ete another fulle of fyne vernage'
And volatyle as was his vsage
And thus I lete them ete drynke and pley
This marchaunt and this monke a day or twey
The thridde day the marchaunte vp riseth
And on his nedys sadly him auyseth
And vp to his counterhouse goth he
To rekne with him self wele may be
Of that yere how that it with him stode
And how that he dispendyd had his gode
And if encresyd he hadde or noon
His bokes and his bagges many one
He leyeth bifory him on his countyng borde
Fulle ryche was his tresoure and his horde
For whiche fulle faste his countre he shitte
And eke he nolde that no man sholde him lette
Of his accountyng for the meane tyme
And thus he sat tyl it was passed pryme
Dan Johy was ryseyn the morowe also
And in the gardyn walked to and fro
And sayd his thynges ful coriously
This gode wyf cam walkyng pryuely
Into the gardeyn there as he walked soft
And him salued as she hath doon ofte
A mayde childe cam in her company
Whiche as she lyst she may gouerne and gye
For yet vndre the yerde was the mayde
O dere cosyn myn dan Johy she sayd
What ayleth you so rathe for to ryse
Nece quod he it ought ynough suffise
Fyue oures to slepe on a nyght
But it were for any olde palled wight
As been these wedded men that lye and dare

As in a fourme ſytteth a derry hare
Were alle forſtraught with houndes grete and ſmale
But dere nece why loke ye now ſo pale
I trowe certis that oure gode man
Hath you laboured ſithen the nyght began
That you were nede to reſte haſtely
And with that worde ſhe lough fulle merely
And with her owne thought wext alle rede
This fayre wyf gan ſhake her hede
And ſayd thus ye god wote alle quod ſhe
Nay cozyn it ſtondith nat ſo with me
For by that god that yaue me ſoule and lyf
In alle the reame of Fraunce is ther no wyf
That laſſe luſt hath to that ſory pley
For I may ſyng allas and wel a wey
That I was born but to no wight quod ſhe
Dar I nat telle how it ſtondith with me
Wherfore I thynke oute of this londe to wende
Or elles of my ſelf to make an ende
So fulle I am of drede and eke of care
This monke began vpon this wyf to ſtare
And ſayd allas my nece god forbede
That ye for any ſorowe or for any drede
Fordo youre ſelf but telle me youre greef
Parauenture I may in youre myſchief
Counceyl or helpe and therfore telleth me
Alle youre annoye for it ſhalle ſecret be
For on my porthoſe here I make an othe
That neuer in my lyf for leef ne loth
Ne ſhal I of no counſeyl you bewrey
The ſame quod ſhe to you I ſay
By god and by this porthoſe I you ſwere
Though men wold me alle to peces tere

Ne ſhalle I neuir to go to helle
Bewrey one worde of that ye me telle
Nat for no coſynage nor alliaunce
But verily for loue and aſſiaunce
Thus been they ſwore and therupon they kyſt
And eche talkyd to other what themlyſt
Coſyn quod ſhe if that I hadde ſpace
As I haue noy and namely in this place
Thay wolde I telle a legende of my lyf.
What I haue ſuffrid ſithen I was a wyf
With my huſbonde al be he youre coſyn
Nay quod this monke by god and by ſeint martyn
He is no more coſyn vnto me
Than is the leef that hangith on the tre
I clepe him ſo by ſeint denys of fraunce
To haue the more cauſe of acquentaunce
Of you whom I haue louyd ſpecially
Aboue alle other women ſikerly
This ſwere I you on my profeſſioun
Telleth youre greef leſt he come adoun
And hyth you and go a wey anoy
My dere loue quod ſhe o my dan Thon
Fulle leef were me this counſeyl to hyde
But oute it muſt it may no lengere abyde
My huſbond is to me the worſt man
That euir was ſithen the worlde began
But ſithen I am his wyf it ſytteth nat me
To telle no wight of oure pryupte
Neyther in bedde ne in none other place
God ſhelde I ſholde tel it for his grace
A wyf ſholde nat ſay of her huſbonde
But alle honoure as I can vnderſtonde
Saue vnto you thus moche I telle ſhalle

As helpe me god he is nat worth at al
In no degre the value of a flye
But yet me greuyth moost his nygardy
And wele ye wote that women naturally
Desire thynges syke as wele as do I
They wolde that theire husbonde sholde be
Hardy and wyse riche and therto fre
And buxum to his wyf and fresshe abedde
But by that ilke lord that for vs bledde
For his honoure my self for to arraye
A sonday next I must nedes pay.
An hundred fraunkes and elles I am lore
yet were I leuer to be vnbore
Than me were do disclaundre or belony
And if my husbonde myght it spye
I nere but lost and therfore I you pray
Lene me this summe or elles must I deye
Dan John I say lene me this hundred frankes
Parde I wol nat fayle you my thankes
If that ye lyst to do that I you pray
For at a certayn day I wol you pay
And doon to you what plesaunce or seruyse
That I may do right as ye lyst deuyse
And but I do god take on me vengeaunce
As foule as hadde genylon of Fraunce
This gentyl monke aunswerd in this maner
Now truly myn owne lady dere
I haue on you quod he so grete a routhe
That I you swere and plight my trouthe
That whan youre husbonde is to fflaundres fare
I wol delyuer you oute of this care
For I wol bryngе you an hundrid frankes
And with that worde he caught her by the shank

And her enbraced hard and kyssed her oft
Goth now youre wey quod he alle styl a nd soft
And let vs dyne as sone as ye may
For by my kalendar it is pryme of the day
Goth now and beth as trewe as I shalbe
Now elles god forbede sir quod she
And forth she goth as ioly as a pye
And badde the cokes that they sholde hye
So that men myght dyne at none
Vp to her husbond is this wyf gone
And knockith at his countour boldly
Who is there quod he. peter it am I
Quod she. What sir how long wolle ye fast
How long tyme wol ye rekyn and cast
youre summes youre bokes and youre thynges
The deuyl haue parte of alle suche rekynynges
ye haue ynough parde of goddes sonde
Come doun to day and let youre baggges stonde
Ne be ye nat ashamyd that dan Johan
Shal fasten alle this long day gone
What let vs go here a masse and go dyne
ye quod this man lytel canst thou deuyne
The coriouse besynesse that we haue
For of vs chapemen also god me saue
And by that lorde that clypyd is seint yue
Scarcely among twyes ten twelue shalle shryue
Contynually lastyng vnto their age
We may wele make chere and gode by sage
And dryue forth the worlde as it may be
And kepe oure astate in pryuyte
Tyl we be dede or elles that we pley
A pylgramage or goon oute of the wey
And therfore haue I gret necessite

Upon this queynte Worlde to auyse me
For euirmore We muſt ſtonde in drede
Of happe and fortune in oure chapemanhede
To Flaundres Wol I go to morowe at day
And come ayen as ſone as euir I may
For Whiche dere Wyf I the beſeeke
As be to euery Wight buxum and meke
And for to kepe oure gode be curious
And honeſtly gouerne Wele oure houſe
Thou haſt ynought in euery maner Wyſe
That to a thryfty houſholde may ſuffiſe
The lacketh none array ne no Bytaple
Of ſyluer in thy purſe ſhalt thou nat fayle
And With that Worde his counterdoore he ſhytte
And doun he goth he Wolde no lenger let
And haſtely a maſſe Was there ſayde
And ſpedily the tables Were layde
And to dyner faſt they them ſpedde
And richely the chapman this monke fedde
And after dyner dan John ſobirly
This chapman toke a parte propirly
And ſayd him thus coſyn it ſtondith ſo
That Wele I ſe to Bruges Wol ye go
God and ſeint Auſtyn ſpede you and gyde
I pray you coſyn Wyſely thider ye ryde
Gouerne you alſo Wele of youre dyete
Attemperatly and namely in this hete
BetWixte vs tWo nedith no ſtraunge fare
Fare Wele coſyn god ſhelde you fro care
And if any thyng by day or by nyght
Be in my poWer or in my myght
That ye me Wolde comaunde in any Wyſe
It ſhalbe do right as ye Wol deuyſe

One thyng or that ye goon if it may be
I pray you to lene it vnto me
An hundrid fraunkes for a weke or twey
For certayn bestys that I must bey
To store with a place that is oures
God helpe me so I wolde it were poures
I shalle nat fayle of my day
Nat for a thousand frankes o myle wey
But let this thyng be secret I you pray
For yet this nyght this bestys I must beye
And fare now wele myn owen cosen dere
Gramercy of youre coost and of youre chere
This noble marchaunt and that anoon
Aunswerd and sayde o cosyn myn dan John
Now sikerly this is a smalle request
My golde is youres whan that ye lyst
And nat onely my golde but my chaffare
Take that ye lyst god shyld that ye spare
But one thyng ye knowe wele ynough
Of chapmen that theire money is their plough
We may creaunce whiles we haue a name
But godeles for to be it is a shame
Pay it ayen whan it lyth at youre ease
After my myght fayne wolde I you please
These hundred fraunckes fette he forth anon
And prynely he toke them to dan John
No wight of alle this londe wyst of this lone
Saupyng this marchaunt and dan John allone
They drynke and speke and rome a while and pley
Tyl that dan John rydeth to his abbey
The morowe cam and forth rideth this marchaunt
To flanders ward his prentyce brought him auaunt
Tyl he cam to bruges wele and merily

Now goth this marchaunt wele and beſily
Aboute his nedys and byeth and creaunceth
He neyther pleyeth at the dyce ne daunſith
But as a marchaunte ſhortly to telle
He ledde his lyf and theire ſlet him duelle
The ſonday next that this marchaunt was agon
To ſeint denys is comen dan Jhon
With crowne and berd alle freſſhe and newe ſhaue
In alle this houſe ther nas ſo lytel a knaue
Ne no wight elles but he was ful fayne
That my lord dan Jhon was come agayn
And ſhortly to the poynte right for to goon
This faire wyf accordeth with dan Jhon
That for his hundryd frankes he ſholde al nyght
Haue her in his armes bolt vp right
And this accorde parfourmed is in dede
In myrthe alle nyght a beſy lyf they lede
Tyl it was day that dan John yede his we
And bad the meny farewele and haue gode day
For none of them ne no wight in the toun
Hath of dan Jhon any ſuſpecioun
And forth he rydeth home to his abbey
Or where him lyſt no more of him I ſay
This marchaunt whan that endyd was the feyre
To ſeint denys he can agayn repaire
And with his wyf he maketh feeſt and chere
And telleth her the chaffare is ſo dere
That nedes muſt he make a cheueſaunce
For he was bounde in a reconyſaunce
To pay twenty thouſand ſheldes anon
For whiche this marchaunt is to paris gone
To borowe of certayn frendes that he hadde
A certayn of frankes and ſome with him he ladde

And whan that he was come into the toun
For cheirte and grete affectioun
Vnto dan John he goth first him to pley
Nat for to aye ne borowe of him money
But for to wytte and se his welefare
And for to telle him of his chaffare
As frendes doon whan they mete in fere
Dan Jhon him maketh feste and mery chere
And he him tolde fulle specially
How he hadde wele spedde and graciously
Thanked be god alle hool his marchaundise
Saue that he must in alle maner wyse
Make yn a cheuesaunce as for the best
And than he sholde be in ioy and rest
Dan John aunswerd certis I am fayne
That ye in hele ar comen home agayn
And if that I were rithe as I haue blis
Of twenty thousand shildes sholde ye nat mys
For ye so hyndely this other day
Lent me golde and as I can and may
I thanke you by god and by seint Jame
But natheles I toke it vnto oure dame
youre wyf at home the same golde ayen
Vpon youre benche she wote is wele certayn
By certeyn tokenes that I can you telle
Now by youre leue I may no lengere duelle
Oure abbot wol oute of this toun anoon
And in his company must I goon
Grete wele oure dame myn owen nece swete
And fare wele dere cosyn tyl we mete
This marchaunt whiche that was ful ware & wyse
Creaunced hath and payd eke in parise
To certayn lumbardes redy in their honde

The some of golde and gate of hem his bonde
And home he goth as mery as a poppyngay
For wele he kne we he stode in suche array
That nedes must he wynne in that byatge
A thousand fraunkes aboue alle his costage
His wyf ful redy mette him at the gate
As she was wont of olde vsage algate
And alle that nyght in myrth they be set
For he was riche and clerely oute of det
Whan it was day the marchaunt gan embrace
His wyf alle newe and kyst her in her face
And vp he goth and makith it fulle tough
Nomore quod she by god ye haue ynough
And watounly with him se pleyed
Tyl atte last the marchaunte thus sayd
By god quod he I am a lytel wrothe
With you my wyf alle though it be me lothe
And wote ye why by god as I gesse
That ye haue made a maner straungeneſſe
Betwixte me and my cosen dan John
ye shulde haue warned me or I had goon
That he hadde you an hundred fraunkes paide
By redy token and helde him eyl appaied
For that I to him spake of cheuesaunce
Me semyd so as by his countenaunce
But neuirtheleſſe be god oure heuyn kyng
I thought to ask of him nothyng
I pray the wif do no more so
Tel me now or that I fro the goo
If any dettoure haue in myn absence
ypaied the lest by thy negligence
I myght him aske a thing that he haue paied
This wyf was nat afferde ne affreyde

But boldly she saide and that anoon
Mary I diffy that fals monke'dan John
I hepe nat of his tohnes neuir a deel
He tohe me certayn golde that wote I wele
What. euyl thedom on his monkes snowte
For god it wote I wende withouten doute
That he hadde yeuen it me bicause of you
To do therwith myn honoure and my prowe
For cosynage and eke for belychere
That he hath hadde fulle often tymes here
But sithen I se it stont in suche disiont
I wol aunswere you shortly to the poynt
ye haue no slacher dettoure than am I
For I wol pay you redily
Fro day to day if so be that I fayle
I am youre wyf score it vpon my tayle
And elles I shalle pay as sone as euir I may
For by my trouthe I haue on myn arzay
And nat in wast bestowed it euerydeel
And for I haue bestowed it so wele
For youre honoure for goddes sake I say
As be nat wrothe and let vs laugh and play
ye shalle my ioly body haue to wedde
By godde I wol nat pay yow but abedde
Forgyue it me myn owne spouse dere
Turneth hether maketh bettre chere
This marchaunt sawe ther was none other remedy
And for to chide it were but a foly
Sithen that thyng may noon other be
Now wyf he saide and I forgeue it the
And by thy lif be no more so largye
Kepe beter thy gode this gyue I the in charge
Thus endith my tale and god vs sende

Talynge ynogh vnto oure lyues ende
Here endith the ſhypmannes tale
And begynneth the wordes of the hooſt
WEle ſayd by corpus dominus ſaid oure hooſt
Now long moot thou ſayle by the cooſt
Thou gentyl mayſter gentyl marinere
God yeue the monke a thouſand laſt quad yere
A ha felawes beware of ſuche a iape
The monke put in the mannys hode an ape
And in this wyſe ete by ſeint Auſtyn
Draw with no monkes no more to youre Inne
But now pas ouir and lette vs ſete aboute
Who ſhalle telle a tale firſt of alle this route
A nother tale and with that worde he ſayde
As curteſly as it hadde be a mayde
My lady prioureſſe by youre leue
So that I wyſt I ſholde you nat greue
I wolde deme that ye telle ſholde
A tale neyte if ſo were that ye wolde
Now wol ye bouche ſauf my lady dere
Gladly quod ſhe and ſayd as ye ſhal here
Here endith the wordes of the hooſt
Here begynneth the prioureſſes prologue
Domine dominus noſter quam admirabile
eſt nomen tuum in vniuerſa terra.
LOrde oure lorde thy name euir maruelous
Is in this large worlde y ſpred quod ſhe
For nat alle only on thy laude precious
Parfourmyd is by men of dignyte
But by the mouthe of children thy bounte
Parfourmed is for on the breeſt ſowkynge
Somtyme ſhewe they thyn herynge
Wherfore in laudes as I can and may

O thou and of the White lily floure
Whiche that the bare is aye maydē alwey
To telle a storye I wol do my laboure
Nat that I may encrese her honoure
For she her self is honoure and the rote
Of bounte nexte her sonne and soules bote
O moder mayd o mayde and modre fre
O busshe vnbrent brennyng in moyses sight
That raue sholdyst doun from the deyte
Through thy humblenes the goost that in the light
Of whose vertue whan he thy hert lyght
Conceyued was the faders sapience
Helpe me to telle it in thy reuerence
Lady thy bounte thy magnificence
Thy vertue and thy grete humylite
Ther may no tonge expresse in no science
For somtyme lady or men praye the
Thou goost bifore of thy benignyte
And getyst vs the light of thy prayer
To gyde vs vnto thy sone so dere
My konnyng is so weke o blyssfulle quene
For to declare thyn high worthynesse
That I ne may the weyght sustene
But as a childe of twelmonth olde or lesse
That can vnneth any worde expresse
Right so fare I and therfore I you pray
Gydith my song as I shalle you say

Here endith the prioures ses prologue
And here begynneth her tale



t Her was in Aſie in a ȝrete cyte
Amonge criſten folke a Jurye
Suſteyned by a lorde of that countre
For foule bſure and lucre of felony
Hateful to criſt and to his company
And through this ſtrete men myght ryde and wend
For it was fre and open at euery ende
A lytel ſcole of criſten folke there ſtode
Doun at the ferther ende in whiche ther were
Children an hepe comen of criſten blode
That lernyd in ſcole yere by yere
Suche maner doctryne as men vſen there
This is to ſay to ſynge and to rede
As ſmale children doon in theire childhede
Among theſe children was a wydowes ſone
A lytel clergyon ſeuyn yere of age
That day by day to ſcole was his wone
And eke also where that he ſawe the ymage

Of criſtes modre had he in vſage
as him was taught to knele adoun and ſay
his aue maria as he goth by the wey
Thus hath this wydow her lytel ſonne taught
Oure blisſed lady criſtes modre dere
To worſhip ay and he forgate it naught
for the ſely childe wolde alwey ſone lere
But whan I remembre me on this matere
Seint nycholas ſtont euir in my preſence
for he ſo yong to criſt dyd reuerence
This lytel chylde his litel booke lernyng
as he ſat in the ſcole at his prymer
he Alma redemptoris mater herd ſyng
as children lernyd their antiphoner
and as he durſt he drewe ay nere and nere
And herknyd ay the wordes and the note
Tyl he the firſt vers coude alle by rote
Naught wyſt he what this latyn was to ſay
for he ſo yong and tendre was of age
but on a day his felawe gan he pray
To expounde him the ſong in his langage
Or telle why this ſong was in vſage
This prayde he him to conſtrew and declare
fulle ofte tymes vpon his knees baze
His felawe whiche that elder was than he
Anſwerd him thus this I haue herd ſay
was made of oure blisſed lady fre
Her to ſalue and ehe her to pray
To be oure helpe and ſocoure whan we dey
Can no more expoune in this mater
I lerne ſong I can but lytel gramer
And is this ſong made in reuerence
Of criſtes modre ſayd this innocente

Now certayn I wol do my diligence
To conne it alle or criſtmas is alyt went
Though that I for my prymer be ſhent
And ſholde be bete thries in an houre
I wol it konne oure lady to honoure
His felawe taught him homward pryuely
Fro day to day tyl he coude it al by rote
And than he ſong it wele and boldly
Fro worde to worde accordyng by the note
Twys aday it paſſed through his throte
To ſcoleward and homward when he went
On criſtes modre ſet was alle his entent
As I haue ſayd through oute the Jury
This lytel childe cam walkyn to and fro
Ful merily wolde he ſyng and cry
O alma redemptoris mater euirmo
The ſwetneſſe his hert perſed ſo
Of criſtes modre that he to hez pray
He can nat ſtynt of ſyngyng by the wey
Oure firſt fo the ſerpent ſathanas
That hath in ieWes hert his waſpes neſte
Up ſwalle and ſaid o ebrayk people allas
Is this a thyng that is to be honeſt
That ſuche a boy ſhal walke as him lyſt
In youre diſpyte and ſyng of ſuche ſentence
Whiche is ayeuſt oure lawes reuerence
Fro thens forth the Jewys haue conſpired
This innocent oute of this worlde to chaſe
An homicyde therto haue they hyred
Right at an aley hadde a pryue place
And as the chylde gan forth by to pace
This curſed Jewe him hent and held faſt
And cutte his throte and in a pytte him caſt

I ſay that in a Wardrope they him threwe
Where as the Jewys purge their entrayl
O curſed folke of herodes alle newe
What may youre cuyl entent you auayle
Murdre wol oute certeyne it wol nat fayle
And namely ther the honoure of god ſhal ſprede
The blode oute crieth on youre curſed dede
O martir ſowdyd vnto virgynite
Now mayſt thou ſyng folowyng euir in one
The white lambe celeſtialle quod he
Of whiche the grete euangelyſt ſeint Joh̃
In pathmos wrote whiche ſayth that they goon
Biforn this lambe and ſyng a ſong ay newe
That neuir fleſſhely woman they ne knewe
This poure widowe awayteth alle that nyght
After her lytel childe and he cam naught
For whiche as ſone as it was day light
With face pale of drede and beſy thought
She hath at ſcole and elles where him ſought
Tyl fynally ſo fer ſhe gan eſpye
That he laſt ſeyn was in the Jury
With moders pyte in her breeſt enclоſed
She goth as ſhe were halfoute of her mynde
To euery place where ſhe hath ſuppoſed
By lykelyhede her lytel childe to fynde
And euir on criſtes modre meke and hynde
She cryde and at the laſt thus ſhe wrought
Among the curſed Jewes ſhe him ſought
She ayeth and ſhe freyneth pytouſly
Of euery Jue that dwellyd in that place
To telle her if her childe went ought forth by
They ſayd nay but ieſu of his grace
yaue in her thought within a lytel ſpace
That in that place after her ſone ſhe cryde

Where he was caſt in a pyt beſyde
O grete god that parfourmyn thy laude
By mouthe of innocentes lo here thy myght
This gemme of chaſtite this emeraude
And ene of martirdome the ruby bright
There he with throte y cozuen tyth ꝯ right
Re Alma redemptoris gan to ſyng
So loude that alle the ſpace gan foz to ryng
The criſten folke that by the ſtrete went
In cam foz to wondre bpon this thyng
And haſtely they foz the prouoſt ſent
Whiche fonde the chylde freſſhely yet bledyng
And herieth criſt that is of heuyn kyng
And ene his modre honoure of mankynde
And afteꝛ that the Jues let he bynde
This childe with pytous lamentacion
Vp taken was ſyngyng this ſong alway
And with honoure and grete proceſſioun
They cary him into the neyte abbey
His modeꝛ ſwounyng by the bere ley
Vnneth myght the people that was there
This ſoꝛouful rachel bryngen from the bere
With turment and with ſhameful deth echoon
This prouoſt doth thies Jewes foz to ſterue
That of this murdre wyſt and that anoon
He nolde no ſuche curſydneſſe obſerue
Euyl ſhal he haue that euyl wol deſerue
Wherfoze with wylde hoꝛſe he dyd them draWe
And afteꝛ he haungyd them by the laWe
Vpon his bere aplyeth this innocent
Bifoze the higth autre While the maſſe laſt
And after that the abbot and his couent
Them ſpedde foz to bery him ful faſt
And Whan they holy Wateꝛ on him caſt

yet ſpake this childe whan ſprent was holy water
He ſong o alma redemptoris mater
This abbot whiche that was an holy man
As monkes been or elles ought to be
This yong childe to coniure he began
And ſayd o dere childe I coniure the
In the vertue of the holy trinyte
Tel me what is thy cauſe for to ſyng
Sithen that thy throte is cutte to my ſemyng
My throte is cutte but vnto my necke goon
Sayd this chylde and as by wey of kynde
I ſholde haue dyed ye long tyme a goon
But Jeſu criſt as ye in bokes fynde
Wol that his glory laſt and be in mynde
And for the worſhip of his moder dere
yet may I ſyng o alma loude and clere
This welle of mercy criſtes modre ſwete
I loued alwey as after my konnyng
And whan that I my lyf ſholde forlete
To me ſhe cam and badde me for to ſyng
This anteme verily in my dyeng
As ye haue herde and whan that I hadde ſong
Me thoughte ſhe leyde a greyn vpon my tong
Wherfore I ſyng and ſyng muſt certayn
In honoure of that blyſſed mayde fre
Tyl fro my tong taken is the greyn
And after that thus ſayd ſhe to me
My lytel childe than wol I feche the
Whan that the greyn is fro the tong y take
Be nat agaſt I wol the nat forſake
This holy monke this abbot him mene I
His tonge oute caught and tok awey the greyn
And he yaue vp the gooſt ful ſoftly
And whan this abbot hadde this meruayle ſeyn

His ſalt terys trilled doun as rayne
And grouelyng platte he fyl to the grounde
And styl he lay as he hadde be y bounde
The couent eke lay vpon the pament
Weppyng and heryng criſtes modre dere
And aftez that vp they roſe and forth they went
And toke awey this martiz fro his bere
And in a tombe of marbyl ſtones cleze
Encloſen they this lytel body ſwete
There he is now god lene vs for to mete
O yong hugh of lyncoln ſlayn alſo
With curſed Jues as it is notable
For it is but a lytel while ago
Pray eke for vs we ſynful folke vnſtable
That of his mercy god ſo mercyable
Vp vs his grete mercy multiplye
For reuerence of his modre mary
Here endith the prioureſſe tale
Here folowith the prologue of chaucers tale
Wh Han ſayd was this myracle euery man
As ſobre was that wondre was to ſe
Tyl that oure hooſt to iapen began
And than at erſt he loked vpon me
And ſayd thus what man art thou quod he
Thou lokeſt as thou woldeſt fynde an hare
For euir vpon the grounde I ſe the ſtare
Approche nere and loke vp merily
Now ware you ſires and let this man haue place
He is ſhape in the waſt aſwele as I
This were a popet in an armes to enbrace
For any woman ſmalle and fayre of face
He ſemyth elyngſſhe by his countenaunce
For vnto no wight doth he daliaunce
Say now ſomwhat ſithen othez folke haue

Ryme of Sir Topas

Tel vs a tale of myrthe and that anoon
Hoost quod he ne be nat cuyl appayed
for other tale certayn can I none
But of a ryme I lernyd long a goon
ye quod he that is gode ynought let vs here
Som deynte thyng me thynketh by thy chere

Here endith the prologue
And begynneth Ryme of sir Topas



Lystey lordes in gode euten
And I wol telle verament
Of myrthe and of solace
And of a knyght fayre and gent
In batel and in turnament
His name was was sir Topas
I borne he was of fer countre
In Flaundres alle, be ponde the see
At poperyng in the place
His fader was a man ful fre
A lorde he was of that countre

Ryme of Sir Topas

As it was goddes grace
Sir Topas wexte a doughty sweyne
White was his face as paynemayne
His lyppes reed as rose
His rode is lyke scarlet in greyn
As I telle you in gode certayn
He hadde a semely nose
His here his berde was lyke saffroun
That to his girdyl raught a doun
His shone of fyne cordwane
Of bruges were his hosen broun
His robe was of syclatoun
That cost many a Jane
He coude hunt at the wylde dere
And ryde an haukyng for ryuere
With grey goshauke on honde
Therto he was a grete archere
Of wrastlyng was ther none his pere
Ther any ram shulde stonde
Ful many a mayde bright in boure
They morned for him paramoure
Whan them were bet to slepe
But he was chaste and no lechoure
And swete as is the bromble floure
That berith the rede hepe
And so it fel upon a day
For soth as I you telle may
Sir Topas wolde oute ryde
He worde upon his horse gray
And in his honde a launce gay
A long swerde by his syde
He pryched through a fayre foreste
Therin is many a wylde beste
ye bothe buche and hare

And as he pryche north and eſt
I telle it you him hadde almeſt
Betyde a ſory care
Ther ſprongen herbes grete and ſmale
The licorice and the cetuale
And many a cloue gilofer
And notemygge to put in ale
Whether it be moyſt or ſtale
Or for to lay in cofre
The birdes ſyng it is no nay
The ſperhauke and the poppyngeay
That ioye was to here
The throſtyl made eke his lay
The wode doune vpon the ſpray
He ſang ful loude and clere
Sir Topas fyl in loue longyng
Al whan he herde the thruſtyl ſyng
And pryked as he were wode
His fayre ſtede in his prickyng
So ſwette that men myght him wryng
His ſydes were al blode
Sir Topas eke ſo wery was
For prickyng in the ſoft gras
So fiers was his corage
That doun he leyde him in the place
To make his stede ſome ſolace
And yaue him gode forage
A ſeint mary benedicite
What ayleth this loue at me
To bynde me ſo ſore
Me dremyd alle this nyght parde
An elfe quene ſholde my lady be
And ſlepe vndre my gore
An elfe quene wol I haue y wys

For in this Worlde no Woman is
Worthy to be my make in toun
Alle other Women I forsake
And to an elphe quene Ime take
By dale and dowe by doun
Into his sadyl he clambe anoon
And pricked ouer style and stone
An elphe quene to aspye
Tyl he so long hath ryden and goon
That he fonde a pryue Wone
In the countre of fayre so Wylde
For in that countre Was ther none
Neyther Wyf ne chylde
Tyl that ther cam a grete geaunt
His name Was sir oliphaunt
A parlous may of dede
And sayde chylde by termagaunt
But if thou pryche oute of myn haunt
Anone I sle thy stede With mace
Here is this quene of fayre
With harpe and lote and symphony
Duellyng in this place
The childe sayde also moot I the
To morowe Wol I mete With the
When that I haue myn armoure
And yet I hope par my fay
That thou shalt With this launce gay
Abyen it ful sore Thy mawe
Shal I perce if may
Or it be fully pryme of the day
For here shalt thou be slawe
Sir Topas drewe abake fulle faste
The geaunt at him stones cast
Oute of a fyl staf slynge

But fayre aſcappyd ſir Thopas
And al was throughꝫ goddes grace
And throughꝫ his faire berynge
ye lyſteneth lordynges to my tale
Meryer than the nyghtyngale
I wol with you roune
How ſir Thopas with ſydes ſmale
Prickyng ouir hylle and dale
Is come agayn to toun
His mery men comaundith he
To make him bothe game and gle
For nedes muſt he fight
With a gyaunt with hedes thre
For paramoure and iolite
Of one that ſhone ſo bright
Come do he ſayde my mynſtralles
And geſtoures for to telle tales
Anone in my armynge
Of Romaunces that been ryalle
Of popes and of cardynalle
And eke of loue longynge
They ſet him forth ſwete wyne
And mede in a meſſelyne
And ryalle ſpyces ry
Of gyngebrede that was ſo fyne
And lycorice and eke comyn
With ſugre that is try
He hadde neyte his white lere
Of clothe alake fyne and clere
A breche and eke a ſherte
And next his ſhert a haketon
And ouir that an habergeon
For perſyng of his herte
And ouer that a fyne hauberke

Was alle y wrought of Jues Warke
Ful strong it Was of plate
And ouer that his cote armoure
As Whyte as is the lyly floure
In Whiche hē Wol debate
His shelde Was al of golde so rede
And therin Was a bores hede
A charbokyl by his syde
And there he swore on ale and brede
How that the gyaunt shalbe dede
Betyde What may betyde
His ianbeaux Were of quyreboly
His swerdis shethe of yuory
His helme of latoun bright
His sadyl Was of reWelbone
His brydel as the sone shone
Or as the mone light
His spere Was of fyne cypresse
That bedith warre and nothyng peas
The hede fulle sharpe y grounde
His stede Was alle dappyl gray
It goth an amble in the wey
Fulle softly and rounde in londe
Lo lordynges myn here is a fytte
If ye Wol any more of it
To telle yet Wolle I fonde
Now holde youre mouthe par charite
Bothe knyght and lady fre
And herkneth to my spelle
Of a batayl of cheualry
And of ladyes loue drurye
Anon I Wol you telle
Men speke of Romaynes of pryce
Of hornchylde and of ypotyse

Ryme of ſir Topas

Of beuys and of ſir guy
Of ſir libeux and of ſir playndemoure
But ſir Topas berith the floure
Of yalle cheualry
His gode ſtede alle he beſtrode
And forth vpon his wey he rode
Ha ſparke oute of bronde
Vpon his creeſt he bare a toure
And therin ſtyched a lyly floure
God ſhelde his body from ſhonde
And for he was a knyght auenterous
He nolde ſlepe in none houſe
But liggen in his hode
His bright helme was his wongez
And by bayteth his deſtrez
Wyth herbes fyne and good
Him ſelf dranke water of the welle
As dyd the knyght ſir percyuel
So worthely vndre wede
n O more of this for goddes dignyte
  For thou quod oure hooſt makyſt me
So wery of thy verylı wdneſſe
That alſo wys god my ſoule bleſs
Myn eris akyn of thy drafty ſpeche
Now ſuche a ryme the deuyl I beteche
This may wele be a ryme dogrel quod he
Why ſo quod I why wolt thou let me
More of my tale than a nothez man
Sithen it is the beſt ryme that I can
By god quod he fulle playnly at one worde
Thy drafty rymyng is nat worth a torde
Thou doſt naught elles but ſpendeſt tyme
Sir at one worde thou ſhalt no lengez ryme
Let ſe whethez thou canſt aught telle in geſte

Or telle in prose somwhat at the lest
In whiche ther may be some myrthe or doctryne
Gladly quod he by goddes swete pyne
I wol you telle a lytel thyng in prose
That ought tolyke you as I suppose
Or elles certayn ye be dangerous
It is a moral tale vertuous
Al be it tolde somtyme in sondry wyse
Of sondry folke as I shal you deuyse
And thus ye wote that euery euangelyst
That telle vs the payne or Jesu cristc
Ne sayth nat alle thyng as his fela we doth
But neuirtheles their sentence is alle soth
And alle accordyng as in theire sentence
Al be ther in theire tellyng difference
For som of them sayth more and some lesse
Whan they his pytous passioun expresse
I mene of marke mathewe Luke and Jhon
But doutles theire sentence is alle one
Therfore lordynges I you beseche
If that ye thynke I vary in speche
As thus thoughe I telle some dele more
Of prouerbes than ye haue herde bifore
Comprehended in this lytel tretys here
To enforce with the effecte of my matere
And thoughe I nat the same wordes say
As ye haue herde yet to you alle I pray
Blampyth me nat for as in my sentence
Shulle ye nowhere fynde no difference
For the sentence of this tretyte lyte
After the whiche mery tale this I wryte
And therfore herkneth what I shalle say
And let me telle my tale I you pray

Sequitur Chaucers tale



pong man that called was
a melleb̃eus the whiche was
myghty and ryche begat a
doughter vpon his wyf that called
was prudence. whiche doughter cal-
led was: Sophye. vpon a day befyl
that he for his disporte wente hym
to the feldys for to playe. his wyf &
his doughter hath he left within his
hous of wiche the dores were fast
shitte. Thre of his olde foes hath hit
aspyed & sette ladders vnto the wal
les of his hous & by the wyndowes
ben entryd in And bete his wyf: and
wouñded his doughter with fiue mor-
tal woundes in fyue sondrye places
that is to say in her feet. in her han-
des. in her eres. in her nose and in her
mouthe. and lefte hem for dede and
wenten her way e. whan melleb̃eus
retorned wayn to his hous and sa-
we al this mischef. he lyke a mad-
man rented his clothes began to we-
pe and crye.

Prudence his wif as ferforth
p as she durst besoughte hym
of his weping to stynte. But
not forthy he began to wepe & crye
euer lenger the more. This noble
wyf prudence remembrid her vpon
the sentence of Ouyde in his booke
that cleped is the Remedye of loue.
where as he sayth. he is a fool that
distrobleth the modre to wepe in the
dethe of her childe. tyl she hath rept
her fille as for a certayn terme. And
than shal a man doo his diligence
wyth amyable wordes her to com-
forte. And praye her of her wepyng
to cese. For whiche reason this noble
wyf prudence suffryd her husbonde
to wepe & crye as for a certayn space
And whã she sawe her tyme. she said
to hym in this wyse. Alas my lord

sayd she why make ye your self for to be lyke a fool for soth it apertayneth not to a wyse man to make suche sorowe your doughter by the grace of god shal wanysshe & escape. & al were it so þ she right now were dede. ye ne ought not for her deth your self to dystroye. Senecke sayth. the wyse man shal take not to grete discó forte for the deth of his children. but certes he shuld suffre it in patience as wel as he abydeth the deth of his owen propre persone.

His mekebe⁹ answerd anon and sayde what man shote of his wepyng seynte þ hath so grete cause to wepe. Jhesu cryst our lord hym self wepte for the dethe of lazarus his frende. Prudence answerd certes wel I wote a temperate wepyng is nothing defended to hym that is sorowful amonge folke in sorowe. But it is rather graunted hym to wepe. The apostle Paule vnto the Romayns wryteth. Wan shal reioyse wyth hem that make ioye and wepe wyth suche folke as ye ne. But a temperate wepyng tough it be graũted hym. Outrageous wepyng certis is defẽded mesure of wepyng shold be cõsidred after the sore þ Senecke techeth vs whã thy frende is dede sayd he. Lete not thin eyen be to moyst of terys ne to moche drie Al though thy terys com to thyn eyen lete hem not falle. And whan thou hast lost thy frende. do dyligently to gete the another frẽde. And this is better than for to wepe for thy frende whiche thou hast lost. For therin is no bote And therfore yf thou gouerne the by sapience put away sorowe out of thy herte.

Remembre the that Jhesus Syrak sayth. That a mã that is Joyous & glade in herte. it hym conserueth flourysshyng in age. and sothly sorouful herte maketh his bones drye. He sayth eke thus that sorowe in herte sleeth ful many a man. Salamon sayth that as moghtes in the shep fles anoyeth the clothes. & the smale wormes the tres Right so anoyeth sorowe the herte of a mã. wherfor vs ought as wel in the deth of our chyldren as in the losse of our goodes temporell haue patience. Remembryng on the patient Job. whan he had lost his children and his temporel goodes & had endured many a ful greuous temptacion. yet sayd he thus. Our lord hath gyuen it to me. Our lord hath berafte hit me. right so as our lord hath wold right so it is don. þ blessid be the name of our lord.

Dthise forsayd thinges answerde melibeus to his wyf prudẽce alle thy wordes ben soth said he and therto prouffytable But truly myn hert is troubeld with this sorowe so greuously that I wote not what to doo. Late al thy trewe frendes sayd prudẽce & alle thy lygnage whiche that ben wise come vn to the. & telle to them your caas and herken what thy say in conceyllyng & gouern you after her sentence.

Salamon ſaith werke alle thy thin-
ges by counceyl / thou ſhalt neuer
repente Than by cauſe of the coun-
ceyl of his wyf prudence. This Mel-
lebeus lete calleȳ a grete congregacy-
on of folke as Cirurgyens. Phiſici-
ens: olde folke and ponge and ſom-
me of his olde enemyes reconcyled
as by theyr ſemblance to his loue /
to his grace and there vithall came
ſomme of his neyghbours that dyd
hym reuerence more for drede than
for loue as it happeth ofte There co
men alſo many ſubtyl flateres and
wyſe aduocates lerned in the lawe.
And whan thyſe folke to gyder aſ-
ſembled were. This Mellebeus ſhe-
wed to them in ſorowe ful wyſe his
caas And by the maner of his ſpeche
hit ſemed that in his herte he bare a
cruel yre redy to do vengeance vpon
his foos. and ſodenly deſyred that he
ſhol begynne the warre. But neuer-
theles yet ayed he theyr counceyl vpon
this mater. A cyrurgyen by ſyence
and aſſente of ſuche as were wyſe ro
ſe vp. And to Mellebeus ſayd as ye
may here.

Ire ſayd he as to vs Cyr-
s urgyens. hit appertyneth
ꝑ we doo to euery wyght
the beſt that we can doo. where as
we be wythholden and to our pacy-
ente that we do no dommage. wher-
for hit happeth many tyme and ofte
That whan two men haue the other
wouñded one Cyrurgyen heleth hem
bothe. wherfore vnto ony arte hit is
not pertynent to norriſſhe werre. ne
partyes to ſupporte. But certes as
to the waryſſhyng / helyng of your
doughter al be it ſo that ſhe be perp-
louſly hurt and wounded. we ſhal
do entendyf beſynes fro day to day.
that wyth the grace of god ſhe ſhalle
be hool and ſound as ſone as poſſy-
ble is. Almoſt in the ſame wyſe the
phiſiciēs anſwerd ſaue that they ſay-
den a fewe wordes moo. That lyke
as maladyes ben cured by theyr con-
trarȳes. right ſo ſhal men warriſſhe
werre by pees / this feyned frendes ꝑ
ſemed reconceyled and his flateraȳs
made ſemblaunte of weepyng / com-
peyred and grutched moche in this
mater. Preyſyng gretely Mellebeus
of myght. of power of rycheſſe and
of frendes. diſpraiſyng the power of
his aduerſaryes. and ſayd vterly ꝑ
he anone ſhold wreken hym on his
aduerſaryes begynnyng warre. Vp
rooſe than an aduocate ꝑ was wyſe
by leue and by counceyl of other that
were wyſe. And ſayd lordynges for
the nede whiche we ben aſſembled in
this place is ful heuy thing and high
mater by cauſe of the wronge and
of the wrekednes that hath ben don
and eke by reſon of the grete dom
mages that in tyme comyng be poſ-
ſyble to falle for the ſame. And eke
by reſon of the grete richeſſe and of
the power of the partyes bothe. For
the whiche hit were a ful grete peryl
to erren in this mater. Wherfor mel-
lebeus this is our entent. we counceyl
you: aboue al thing that right anon
thou do dyligence in ſtepyng of thy

propre persone in suche wyse ꝑ thou ne want none esspe ne watche. thy body for to saue. & after thy hous we counceylle that thou sette sufficient garnyson so as they may as wel thy body as thy hous defende. But certes for to meue warre ne sodenly for to do vengeance. we may not deme in so lytyl tyme that hit shold be prouffytable wherfor we ayen leyser & space to haue delyberacion in this caas to deme. For the comyn prouerb sayth thus he that sone demeth. sone shal repente. and elre men say that. ꝑ Juge is wyse ꝑ sone vnderstondeth a mater and Jugeth by leyser. For alle be it so that taryeng be noyful. Algates it is not to be reproued in peuyng of Jugement ne in vengeance takyng whan it is sufficient & resonable. And that shewed our lord ihū crist by ensample. For whan the woman ꝑ was taken in adoultry was brought in hisꝑsence to knowe what shold be do of her persone. Al be it ꝑ he wyst welle hym self what he wold do. yet ne wold he answere sodenly but he wolde haue delyberacion. and in the grouñd he wrote twyes. And by this cause we aye delyberacioun and we shal than by the grace of god conceyl yow that thyng that is most prouffitable. Up starte than the ponge folre attones & the most parte of this cõpanye haue scorned thys olde wyse man and begonne to make noyse and saiden Right so as whyle that yron is hote men shold smite Right so while that this thing is fresshe and newe shold men wreken her wronges. And with a loude voys they cryden warre. warre. Up rose then one of this olde wyse men. and made contenaunce with his hande ꝑ men shold holde hem styl & yeue hym audyence. Lordynges sayd he ther is ful many a man that cryeth warre warre that wote full lytyl what warre amounteth. warre at his begynnyng hath so grete an entree and soo large ꝑ euery wyght may entre whã hym lyketh & lyghtly fynde warre. but certes what ende that therof shal falle it is not lyght to knowe. for sothly whan that warre is ones begon there is full many a child vnborne of his moder that shal dye and sterue yong by cause of that warre or elles lyue in sorowe or deye in wretchydnesse. And therfor or ony warre begynne men must haue grete counceyl & grete delyberacion. And whan this olde man wende to haue enforced his tale by resons. wel nyghe attones began they al tarrise for to bresten his tale and bad ful faste his wordes abregge. For sothly who so prechyth to them that haue no luste to here his tale his wordes or his sermon anoyeth them for Ihesus syrak sayth that musike in wepyng is a noyous thing. This is as moche to saye. as moche auayleth to spekre before folke. to whom his speche anoyeth. As it doth to singe before hym that wepeth. And whã this olde man sawe ꝑ he wanted audience Al shamefast he sette hym dõn agayn. For salamon saith. there as thou mayst haue none audience. enforce the not to spekre. I see wel said this wyse man ꝑ the comyn prouerbe is soth. That good conceyl wanteth

whan it is moste nede.

p Et had this melleb̃eus in his counceyl many folke that priuely in his ere coũ-ceylled hym certayn thinges & coun ceylled hym contrarye in general au dience. whan Melleb̃eus sawe that the greteſt parte of his counceyl were acco:ded that he ſhold make warre. anon he condescended to they: coũ ceylling and fully affermed theyr sentence.

m Tho:d ſaid prudence I pou beſeche as herthely as I dare & can ne haſte you not to faſte. And fo: alle guerdons as yeue me audyence. For piers alfons ſayth. who ſo doth to the other good o: harme haſte the not to acquyte it. for in this wyſe thy frende wyl abyde. and thyn enemye ſhal the lenger lyue in drede. The p:ouerbe ſayth he haſteth wel that can abyde wyſely. & in wycked haſte is no profyt.

t His Melleb̃eus anſwerde to his wyf prudence. I purpoſe not ſayd he to werke by thy coũceyl fo: many cauſes and reſons For certes euery wyght wold holde me than a fool. this is to saye yf I fo: thy counceylling wold chãge thinges that ben o:deyned and affermed by ſo many wyſe peple. Secondly I ſaye that alle women ben wicked and none good of them alle. For of a thuſand men ſayth ſalamõ I fond one good. But of al women certes good women fonde I neuer noon. And alſo certes yf I gouerne me by thy coũceyl it ſhold ſeme that I hade gyue to the ouer me the maſtrye. And god fo:bede that it were ſo For Iheſus ſyrak: ſayth that yf thy wyf hane the maſtrye She is contrarious to her huſbond. And ſalamon ſayth to thy wyf ne to thy chylde ne to thy frende neuer in thy lyf ne yeue power ouer thy ſelf. For better it were that thy chyldren axe of the thynges that hem nedeth. than thouſe thy ſelf in the hondes of thy chylderen and certes yf I ſhold werke by counceylling my counceyl muſt be ſomtyme ſecret tyl it were tyme that it muſte be knowe. And this may not be yf I ſhold be counceylled by the. For women can kepe no coũceyl

w Than dame prudence ful debonayrly and with grete pacience hade herde al that her huſbond lyſte for to ſay. thãn axed ſhe of hym licence for to ſpeke & ſayd in this wyſe my lorde ſayd ſhe as to your firſt reſon it may lightly be anſwerd fo: I ſay that it is no ſolye to chaunge counceyl whan the thynge is chaunged o: elles whan the thyng ſemeth other wyſe thãn it was beforn and more ouer I ſay though that ye haue ſworn and be bycht to perfo:me your emp:yſe. and by Juſſ cauſe ye do it not. men ſholde not ſay ther fo: that ye were a lyer ne fo:ſworn. For that book: ſayth þ the wyſe man maketh no leſyng whan he tourneth his corage to the better. And al be it ſo that your emp:yſe be eſtablyſſhid and o:deyned by grete multitude of

peple. yet dar ye not accomplysshe ỳ same ordenaunce but pow lyke. For the trouthe of thynges and the prof- fyt be rather fould in fewe folke that ben wyse and full of reson than by grete multytude of peple wher euery mã clatereth what ỳ him lyst. sothly suche multitude of peple is not ho- nest. And to the second reson wher as ye sayn that al women ben wycked Saue your grace. certes ye despise al women in this wyse. and he that all despiseth. al displeseth as saith the bo ke. ¶ Seneke sayth who so wol haue sapyence shal no man dispraysse. but he shal gladly teche the science that he can wythout presumpcion. or pryde. And suche thynges as he can not. he shal not be ashamed for to lerne hem and enquyre of lasse folke than hym self. And that there hath ben many a good woman. it may be preuyd. For cryst wolde neuer descende for to be borne of a woman. yf al womẽ had be wycked. and after that for the gre te bounte that is in our lord ihũ crist whan he was risen from deth to lyf. appeerd rather to a woman than to his appostles. and though that sala mon said he fond neuer womã good yet foloweth not therfor that al wo- men ben wycked For thought he fon de no good woman certes many a- nother mã hath fonden many a wo- man ful good. and ful trwe. or elles peraventure thentent of Salamon was this that in souerayn bounte he fond no woman. This is to say that there is no wyght so good that he ne wanteth som of the perfectiõ of god that is his maker.

Our thyrde reson is thys. ¶ ye saye that yf ye gouerne you be my counceyl it shol de seme that ye had yeue me the mais trye and the lordship ouer your perso ne. Dyre saue your grace. it is not so yef it so were that noman shold bee conceyled but only of hem that had lordship and maistrie of his persone (they wold not be counceyled so of- te as they ben. for sothly that man ỳ ayeth conceyl of a. purpos. yet hath he his fre chays whether he wyl wer ke by that conceyl or not ¶ And as to your fourth reson there that ye say ỳ the Janglerye of woman can not hy de thynges that they knowe. as who sayth a women can not hyde ỳ shee woot. Dyre thyse wordes ben to vnderstonde of women ỳ ben Jan- gleresses and wicked of whiche wo- men men say. that thre thynges dry- uen a man fone out of his hous that is to saye. smoke. droppyng of rayn and wycked wyues. And of suche women sayth Salamon. that it we re better to dwellen in deserte. than wyth a woman that is rpotous. and syr by your leue that am not I. For ye haue ful ofte assayed my gre- te sylence and my grete patience. And eke how wel I can hyden and hele thynges that men ought secretly to hyde. ¶ And sothly as to your fyfthe reson where that ye saye that in wicked conceyl women vayn- quisshe men. god wote that reson sta- deth here in no stede. For vnder- stonde now that ye aye conceyl to

do wyckednes And yf ye wol werke wickednes. And your wyf restrayne that wycked purpoos and ouercome you by reson and by goodcouceyl. Certes your wyf ought rather to be prayſed than to be blamed.

Thus ſhold ye vnderſtōde the philoſophre that wicked women bayniſſhe her huſbondes And there as ye blamen alle women and her reſons. I ſhalle ſhewe by enſample þ they be good and p:ouffytable. Ther ſomme men haue ſayd that the conceyl of women is to dere. o: ellis to litel of prys. But al be it ſo þ many women be bad. & her conceyl euyl. and nothing worth. yet haue men founde ful many a good woman & diſcrete and wyſe in conceyllynge. Lo Jacob be the conceyl of his moder Rebecca whan the bleſſyng of Iſaac his fader and the lordſhip ouer al his brethern. Judith by her goode conceyl delyuered the cyte of bethule in whiche he dwellyd out of the handes of olyphernes that had beſieged it and wold haue it diſtroyed. Abigail deliuerȳd Nabal her huſbond fro dauid the kyng that wolde haue ſlayn hym And peeſyd the yre of the kynge by her wytte and by her good conceyl. Heſter by the conceyl enhaunced gretely the people of god in the Regne of Aſſuerus the kyng & ſam the boūte in good conceyllyng of many a good woman men may telle. And elle more ouer whan our lord god had made Adam our former fader. he ſayd in this wyſe. it is not good man to be allon. make we to hym an helpe ſemblable to hym ſelf to here may ye ſee that yf wome were not good and her conceyl good and p:ouffytable. Our lord god of heuen wold neu haue wrought hem ne called hem helpe of man but rather confuſion of man. And there ſayd ones a clerke in two verſys. What is better thā Jaſpar. wyſedom And what is better than wyſedom: woman & what is better than good woman. no thyng. And ſo yt by many other reſons may ye ſee that many women been good and their conceyl good and p:ouffytable.

And therfor yf ye wyl truſt to my conceyllyng I ſhal reſtore you your doughter hool and ſounde. And elle I wyl do ſo moche that ye ſhalle haue honour in this caas. Whan melleebee had herde the wordes of his wyf Prudence. he ſayd thus. I ſee wel that the worde of Salamon is ſoth: he ſaith that wordes that been ſpoken diſcretely by ordenaunce been honycombes for they yeue ſwetenes to the ſoule & hoſſomnes to the body

By cauſe of thy ſwete wordes & elle for I haue aſſayed and preued thy grete ſapience and thy grete trouthe the I wyl gouerne me by thy conceyl in al maner thyng.

Now yet ſayd dame prudence. ſyn ye vouchefauf to be gouerned by my conceyl I wyl enforme yow how ye ſhal gouerne yow in cheſyng of your conceyl. Firſt to forē al werkys ye ſhal beſeche the hyghe god þ

he be your counceyl. & shape yow to su
che entent þ he yeue yow counceyl &
cõforte As to yor taught his sone At
al tymes thou shalt plese & praye him
to dresse thy wayes And lose that al
thy counceyl be in hym for euermore

Saynt Jame clerke sayth. yf ony of
you haue nede of sapience. Aye it of
god And after that than shal ye take
counceyl in your self. And examyne
wel your thoughtes of suche thinges
as ye thynke that ben beste for your
prouffyt And than shal ye dryue a
way from your hertes tho thinges þ
ben contrarious to good counceylle
this is to say. vre. couetyse. & hastie
nesse. First he that ayeth counceyl of
hym self. certes he must be wythou
ten vre. for many causes. The firste
is this þ he that hath grete vre and
wrath in hym self. he weneth alway
to do thyng that he may not do. and
secondly he that is prous & wrathful
may not deme wel And he that may
not deme wele may not wel counceyl
Another is this. he that is prous &
wrathful as sayth Seneke may not
spekē but blameful thynges. And
wyth his vicyous wordes he stereth
other folke to angre and to vre And
eke syr ye must dryue couetyse out of
your herte For thapostle sayth that
couetyse is the rote of alle harmes.
And truste wel that a couetous man
can not deme wel ne thynke but on
ly to fulfylle the ende of his couetyse
and certes that may neuer be accom
plyssed. For euer more the more ha
bundaunce a man hath of richesse.
the more he desyreth. And ye muste
also dryue out of your herte hastyv
nes. For certes ye may not deme for
the beste hastely a sodeyn thought that
falleth in your herte. Wyt ye muste
auyse you ayn it ful ofte. For as ye
herde to fore the comyn puerbe. Whi
che is this. he that sone demeth sone
repenteth. Syre ye be not alway in
lyke dysposicion For certes somtym
suche thyng as semeth that is good
for to do. Another tyme it semeth to
you the contrarye. And whan ye ha
ue take counceyl in your self and ha
ue demed by good delyberacion su
che thyng as semeth you beste. Than
I counceyl you to kepe it secrete And
bewrayr not your counceyl to ony
psone but yf it so be þ ye wene sikerly
þ thrugh your bewrayeng youre
condicion shalle be to yow the more
prouffytable For ihūs syrak sayth.
nether to thy frende. ne to thy foo dis
couer not thy secrete counceyl. ne thy
folye. For they wyl peue the aydien
ce. lokyng & supportyng in yonr pre
sence. And scorne you in your absen
ce. An other clerke sayth that scarse
ly shalt thou fynde ony persone that
may kepe counceyl secretely. The bo
ke sayth whiles þ thou kepest thy cou
ceyl in thy herte. thou kepest it in thy
pryson. & whan thou wrayest hit to
ony wyght he holdeth the in his sna
re. And therfore it is better to hyde
your counceyl in your herte. thā pra
ye hym to whom ye haue bewrayed
your counceyl that he wold kepe it
close & stylle. For seneca sayth yf it
be so that thou ne may thy counceyl

hyde How darst thou pray ony other wyght to hyde thy counceyl / nepe it secrete. But yf thou wene sikerly ꝑ thy bewrayyng of thy counceyl to a persone wyl make thy cõdicion stonding in the better plyght. than shalt thou telle hym thy cõceyl as in this wyse. First thou shalt make no semblaunce whether the were leuer pees of werre or this or that ne shewe hym not thy wyl. ne thyn entente For trust wel that comunly thyse counceyllours ben flaterers namely the counceyllours of grete lordes. For they enforce them alway rather to speke playsaunt wordes enclynyng to the lordes luste than wordes that ben trewe and prouffytable. And therfore men sayn that the riche man hath ful dewhan good counceyl but yf he haue it of hem self. And after that thou shalt considere thy frendes and thyn enmyes. / as touchyng thy frendes thou shalt consydere whiche of them ben moste trewe wyseſt. most fayth ful. oldeſt and most approued in cõ ceyllyng. And of hem shalt thou axe thy cõceyl as the caas requyreth. I say first ꝑ ye shal clepe to your counceyl your frendes ꝑ ben trewe. For salamon saith right as the herte of a man delyteth in fauour that is swete Right so the counceyl of trewe frendes yeueth swetenes th the soule. He saith also there may no thyng be lykened to a trewe frende. For certes gold ne syluer be not so moch worth as the good wyl as the trewe frende / ellys he saith ꝑ a trewe frende is a grete defense. who ꝑ it fyndeth cer tes he fyndeth a grete tresour than shal ye elre vnderstonde yf ꝑ your trewe frendes ben discrete and wyse for the book saith axe alwey thy counceyl of them ꝑ ben wyse / by this same reson shalt ye clepe to your counceyl of your frendes ꝑ ben of age whiche ꝑ haue seyn many thynges / ben ex pert in dyuerse thinges. / be approued in cõceyllyng. for the book saith in olde men is the sapience / in longe time that prudence and tullius sayth. ꝑ grete thinges ben not ay accomplyſſhed by strenthe ne by delyuernes of body. but by counceyl and by auctoryte of persones and by science the which thre thinges ne be not feble by age. but certes they enforce and en creece day by day. And than shal ye kepe this for a generayl rewle Fuſte shal ye clepe to your cõceyl a trewe or your frendes that ben speyal For salamon saith Many a frende haue thou. but amonge a thousand cheſe the one be thy counceyllour. For alle be it so ꝑ thou first telle thy cõceyle to fewe. Thou maist after telle thy cõceyl to mo folke yf it be nede. but forse alway ꝑ thy cõceyllours haue tho thre condicions ꝑ I haue said be fore. ꝑ is to saye that they be trewe. wyse / of olde experience. And weel not alway in euery nede by one cõ ceyllour allone. for somtyme it be hoo uith to be cõceylled by many. For salamõ saith. saluacion of thinges is there where be many cõceyllours

Now sithe I haue tolde you of whiche folke that ye shold be coun ceyllyd. Nowe wyl I telle whiche

counceyl ye shal eschewe. First ye shal eschewe the counceyllyng of fo= les. For Salamon sayth take noo counceyl of a fool for he ne can not counceyl but after his luste and hys affection. The book sayth that the propertie of a fool is this. he troweth hat me lyghtly of euery wyghte.

And lyghtly troweth al bounte in hym self. ye shal also eschewe the coū ceyllyng of flaterars suche as enfor ce hem rather to prayse your perso = ne by flaterye. than to telle yow the sothfastenes of thinges. wherfore Tulyus sayth. Amonge al the peste= lences that ben in frenship the gret = test is flaterye. And therfor it is mo = re nede to eschewe and drede flaterers thā ony other peple. The book sayth thou shalt rather fle & drede the swe= te wordes of flaterers. and prayseth than the egre wordes of thy frende þ sayth to the thy sothes. Salamon sayth that the wordes of a flaterer. is a snare to catche Innocētes he sayth also he that sayth to his frende wor = des of swetnes and of pleysaunce setteth a nette before his feet to cat = che hym & therfor sayth tulius En= clyne not thyn eres to flaterers ne ta = ke no counceyl of wordes of flaterie And caton sayth auyse the wel to es = chewe wordes of flaterey. of swete= nes and of pleysaunce. And elle thou shalt eschewe the coūceylyng of thyn olde enemyes that ben reconcyled The book sayth that no wyght retor neth in to the grace of his olde enemi es sauffly. And ysope sayth Ne truste not to them wyth whom thou hast had warre or enemyte. ne telle not he thy counceyl. And seneke telleth the cause why it may not be and sayth where as a grete fyre hath long tym endured. that there ne dwelleth sōme vapour of warmnes. And therfore sayth salamon. In thyn olde foo truste thou neuer For truly though thyn enemye be reconcyled & maketh the chere of humblyte and louteth to the wyth his hede. ne truste hym neuer the more. For sikerly he maketh that feyned humblyte more for hys owen prouffyt than for the loue of thyn owen psone. by cause he demeth the to haue victorye ouer his persone by suche fayned contenaūce. The whiche victorye he myght not haue by strenght ne warre Peter alsone sayth make no felaushyp with thyn olde e. nemyes for yf thou do thy wyl puer ten it to wickednes. & elle thou must eschewe the coūceyl of such þ ben thy seruaūtes & beren the grete reuerēce. For paeuenture they saye more for drede than for loue. & therfor sayth a phi losophre in this wyse. There is no wight pfightly trewe to hym þ he so= re dredeth. & tulius sayth there is noo wight so grete as an emperour that long may endure but yf he have mo re loue of his peple thā drede. Thou shalt eschewe te coūceyl of folke þ be dronkelewe For they can not coūceil hyde. For Salamon sayth there is no pryuyte where as regneth drō kenes. ye shal alwaye have in suspect suche folke as counceylle you ony thyng pryuely and counceil le you the contrarye openly.

Cassiodre saith that it is a maner sleyght to hyndre whan a man sheweth to do one thing openly & wyrketh the contrarye prively. Thou shalt also haue in suspect the counceylling of wycked folke. For the book saith that the counceyl of wicked folke is alle waye ful of fraude And dauid sayth. That blyssful is ꝑ man that hath not folowed the counceyl of wycked folke. Thou shalt also eschewe the counceylling of yong folke for her counceyl is not rype.

Now syre syth I haue shewed yow alle this of whiche folke ye shal take your counceyl and of whiche folke ye shal eschewe theyr counceyl. Now wol I take you how ye shal examyne your counceyl. After the doctryne of Tullius in examynynge thay of youre counceyllours. ye shal considere many thynges. Alderfirst thou shalt cõsydere. that in that thynge that thou art purposed and vpon what thyng thou shal haue counceyl that verayly trouthe be sayd and conserued. This is to saye. telle al truly thy tale. For he that sayth fals. may not well be counceylled in ꝑcaas of the whiche he seyth. And after thys consydere thre thynges that accorde to that thou purposyst the first for to do by thy counceyllours yf reson accorde therto. And eke yf thy myght may attayne therto. And yf the more parte and the better parte of thy counceyllours accorde therto or no Thã shalt thou consydere what thyng shal folowe of that counceylling as hate. pees. watte. grace. prouffyt. or domage. and many other thynges. And of al thyse thinges thou shalt consydere of what rote is engendryd the mater of thy counceyl & what fruyt it may concerne & engendryn. Thou shal consydere eke alle the causes from whens they be sprongen And whan ye haue examyned your counceyl as I haue said & whiche parte is the better and more prouffytable and haue approued by many wyse folke and olde. Than shalt thou consydere yf thou may performe it & make of hit a good ende For reson wold not that ony man shold begynne a thing but yf he myght performe it as hym oughte. ne no mã shold take on hym so heuy a charge that he myght not bere it. For the prouerbe saith he ꝑ to moche embraceth distreyneth lytyl. And caton sayth also assaye to doo suche thinges as thou hast power to do. on lesse ꝑ the charge oppresse the to sore. And that the behoueth to weyue that thynge that thou hast begonne. & yf that thou be in doubte whether thou may performe hit or not These rather to suffre than to begynne. And peter alfons sayth yf thou haste myght to doo a thynge whiche thou muste repete it is better nay thã ye. This is to saye that it is better to holde thy tonge stylle than for to spekyn Than maist thou vnderstonde by strenger resons. ꝑ yf thou hast power to performe a werke. the which thou shalt repente. than it is better that thou suffre than begynne.

Syn they that defeden euery wyght to assaye a thing of the whiche he is in doubte. whether he may performe it or noo. And after whan ye haue examyned your counceyl as I haue sayd beforme & knowe wel that ye may performe your empryse. confer me it than sadly til it be at an ende.

Dame it is reson sayd she & time that I shewe you whā and wherfore that ye may chaunge your counceyllours without repreef. Sothly a man may chaunge his counceyl or his purpos yf the cause cesseth or whan an other cause begynneth For the lawe vpon thinges that newly betyde behoueth newe counceyl. And Seneca saith yf that thy counceyl come to the eres of wicked men thyn enemyes chaunge thy counceyl. thou mayst also chaūge thy counceyl yf so be that ther be errour or thou fynd ony other cause harme or dommage may betyde. Also yf thy counceyl be dishoneste or ellis cometh of dishoneste cuase chaūge thy counceyl. For the lawe sayth that al behestes that been dyshoneste ben of no valwe. And elle yf so be þ it be Impossyble or may not goodly be performed or kept. take this for a general rewle that euery counceyl þ is affermed so strongly that it may not be chaunged for no condicion þ may betyde I saye that ylle counceyl is wicked.

This melybeus whā he herd the doctrine of his wyf dame prudence he answerd in this wyse. Dame sayd he as yet in to this tyme ye haue couenably taught me as in general now I shal go ouerne me in chesyng & wythholdyng of my counceyllours But now wold I fayn that ye wold condescende especial & telle me how lyketh or what semeth you by your counceyllours þ we haue chosen in our present nedes.

My lord sayd she I beseche you in alle humblesse that ye wyl not wylfully replie ayenst my reson. ne distempre youre herte though I speke thing that you displese for god wote that is not myn entente. I speke it for your beste. for your honour & profit eke And sothly I hope that your benygnyte wyl take it in pacience. that your counceyl as in this cbas ne shold not as to speke properly be callyd a counceyllyng but a mouycion or a meuyng folye in whiche counceyl ye haue errȳd in thassemblyng of your counceyllours For ye shold first haue clepyd a fewe folke to your counceyl. & after þ ye myght haue shewed it to moo folke yf it had be nede. But certes ye haue sodenly cleped to your counceyl a grete multitude of peple ful chargeaunt and ful anoyous for to here

And ye haue errȳd for there as ye shold haue cleped to your counceylle youre trewe frendes olde and wyse. ye haue cleped straunge folke. fals and flaterars and enemyes reconnceylled and folke that doon now reuerence wythout loue.

And also ye haue erryd for ye haue
brought wyth you yre. counceyle and
hastynes. the whiche thre thinges be
contrarious to euery honest coun-
ceyl & profyytable. & whiche thre thin
ges ye haue not amenused ne destro-
yed nether in your self ne in your con
ceyllours as ye ought ye haue erryd
also for ye haue shewed to your con
ceyllours your talent & your affecci-
on to make warre anon and for to
doo vengeance. They haue aspyed
by your menyng to what thyng ye
be enclyned. & therfor howe they coun
ceyled you rather to your talent thā
to your profyyte. ye haue erryd also
for you semeth that it suffyseth you
to haue be counceyled by thyse con-
ceyllours only & wyth lytyl a vyse.
where as in so grete nede & so hye. hit
had be necessarye mo counceyllours
And more deliberacion to performe
your emprise. ye haue erryd also for
ye haue not examyned your counceyl
in the forsayd mater ne in dewe ma-
nere as the caas requireth. ye haue er
ryd for ye haue made no dyuysion
betwyne your counceyllours. This
is to saye betwene your frendes &
your feyned counceyllours ne ye ha-
ue not knowe the wylle of your fren
des olde & wyse. But ye haue cast al
le her wordes in an hutchepot. & en-
clyned your herte to the more parte &
to the gretter nombre & by yow con
descended And also ye wote wel that
men shul alway fynde a gretter par
te of nombre of fooles than of wyse
men. And therfore the counceylles
ben at congregacions & multitude
of folke there as men take more re
warde to the nombre thā to the sapi-
ence of persones. ye see wel that in suche
counceellinges foles haue the maistrye.

Ellebeus answerde again
m I graunte wel I haue erro
But there as thou hast tol-
de me here before that he is not to blā
me that chaungeth his counceyl in cer
tayn caas & for certayn Iuste causes
I am alle redy to chaunge my coun-
ceyllours right as thou list & as thou
wylt deuyse. the prouerbe sayth that for
to doo synne is mannysshe. but cer
tes for to pseuere long in synne it is
a werke of the deuyll.

O this sentence answerd da
t me prudence & said examyne
your counceyl & lete vs se whiche of
them haue spoken most resonably &
taught you best counceyl. & for as mo
che as the examinacion is necessarie
late vs begyn at surgyens & at physi
cyens that first spoken in this matere I
say you that the surgyens & the physi
cyens haue said you discretly as them
ought. For they said ful wyselyche to
the office of hem hit appertayneth to
do to euery wyght honour & prouffit
& no wyght to enuye. & after their
craft do grete diligēce vnto the cure
of hem the whiche they haue in gou-
naūce. & syn right as they haue ans
werd wyselyche & discretely. right so I
rede you that ye be hyghly & souerain
ly gwerdonned for her noble speche.
& eke for they shold do the more enti-
tif besynes in the curacion of youre
doughter. For alle be it so that they be
your frendes Therfor shal ye not suf
fre that they shal serue you for nought

But ye ought to gouerne hem & shewe hem largesse. And as touchyng that the physiciens entresyd in thys cas that is to say þ in maladies one contrarye is warysshed by another contrarye I wold fayn knowe how ye vnderstonde that texte & what is your sentence. Certes sayd melibeus I vnderstonde that in this wyse That right as they haue doon me a contrarious right. right so shold I do hem another. For right as they haue venged hem on me & doon me wronge. right so shold I venge me on hem & do hem wronge and than haue I cured one contrarye by another contrarye Lo sayd dame prudence how lightly is euery mã enclyned to do his owen desir & his owen plesãce certes sayd she the wordes of þ physiciẽs shold not be vnderstõde in this wyse for certes wyckednes is not contrarious to wyckednes. ne vengeance to vengeance no wrong to wrong but euerliche of them entresyth & aggredgyth other But certes the wordes of the physiciens shold be vnderstonde in this wise. for good & wickednes be two contrarious. and pees & warre. vengeance & suffrance and discorde. & accorde and many other thinges. But certes wickednesse shal be warysshed by goodnes. And discorde by accorde. & warre by pees. & so forth by other thinges. & herto accordeth saint Poule thapostle in many places. he sayth yelde no harme to harme ne wycked speche to wicked speche but do wel to hym that doth the harme and blysse hym that sayth the harme.

And in many other place he sayth & amonesseth pees and accorde. But now wold I speke to yow of the counceyl whiche þ was yeue to yow by the men of lawe and wyse folke that saiden alle by one accorde as ye haue herde. that ouer all thinges ye shold doo diligence to kepe your persone & to warnestore your hous And sayden also þ in this cas ye ought for to werke ful aduysedly & wyth grete discretion & delyberacõ And syre as to the first poynte that toucheth the kepyng of your persone ye shal vnderstonde that he þ hath warre Shalle euermore deuoutly & meekely beseken & prayen before alle thinges Ihesu cryste of his mercy þ he wol haue hym in his protection & be his souerayn helper at his nede. For certes in thys werke there is no wyght that may be counceylled ne kepte sufficiẽtly wythout the kepyng of our lord Ihesu cryste. To this entente accordeth the prophete dauid þ sayth yf god ne kepe the cyte in vayn walketh he that kepeth it. Now syr than shul ye commytte the kepynge of your persone to your trewe frendes that ben yproued and knowen And of them shall ye axe helpe your persone to kepe. For Caton sayth yf thow haue nede of helpe axe it of thi frende. And after this than shalle ye kepe you from al straunge folkes & frowyers and haue alleway in suspecte her companye. For Peter alfons sayth ne take no companye by the waye of stranger men.

but yf it so be þ thou haue knowen hem before tyme And yf so be that ye haue not knowen hem. And wyl nedes fal in thy companye peraventre wythout thyn assente. enquere them as subtely as thou canst or mayst of his conuersasion & of his lyf before. And fayne thy way & say that thou wolt go thyder as thou wolt not go And yf he bere a spere holde the on the right syde. And yf he bere a swerde holde the lifte syde And after thus than shal ye kepe yow wysely from al suche maner peple as I haue said before & hem and her counceyl eschewe. And after this than shal ye kepe yow in suche maner þ for ony presumpsion of your strengthe. that ye despise ne attempte not the might of your aduersarye. And thus beware þ ye lette not the kepyng of your persone for ony presumpcion. For euery wyse man dredeth his enemye. And salomon sayth wyse ful is he þ of noo thing hath drede. For certes he that thorugh the hardynes of his herte or of hym self hath to grete presumpcō hym shal cuyl betyde. than shal yow euer more contrewarte enbusshemēts in speciall. For sencle sayth the wyse mā that dredeth harmes escheweth. harmes ne he fallith no peril þ perille eschewith. & al be it so þ thou seme þ thou be in siker place. yet shalt thou do alway dilygence in kepyng of thy persone not only from thy grete est enemyes but from the leste enemye: Duyde sayth that the lytyl wesyl wold sle a grete bolle & the grete herte. And the book sayth. That a lytyl thyne may pryche the kynge sul sore. And an honde wyl sle the wylde bore but neuertheles I saye not that thou shalt be so cowarde that thou doubte. where as is no drede. The book sayth that som folke haue grete lust to deceyue but yet they dreden hem to be deceyued. thou shalt drede to be empoysoned. and kepe the from the companye of scornes For the book sayth scornes make no companye. But flee her wordes as venym. Now as to the secounde poynt where as your wyse counceyl louris conceylled yow to warnysshe your hous wyth grete dylygence I wold fayn knowe how that ye vnderstonde the wordes & what is the sentence Melibeus answerd & sayd Certes I vnderstonde it in this wyse that I shalle warnysshe my hous wyth toures suche as be castelles & other maner edyfyces wyth armure and other maner artylerye by suche thinges whiche I may my persone & my hous so defende þ myn enemyes shal be in drede my hous for to approche.

To this sentence answerde dame prudence. warnysshyng sayth she of grete towres & edifyces wyth grete costages & grete trauayll. And whan that they be al complysshed yet be they not worth a strawe. But yf they ben defended by trewe frendes that ben olde and wyse. And vnderstonde wel that the grettest and strongest garyson that a rych man may haue as well to kepe his persone as his good. is that he be beloued wyth his subgettys and

For thus saith tulle þ there is a manner garison þ no mā may vanquisshe ne discōfite. & þ is a lord to be beloued of his cytesens & of his peple Now syr as to your thirde poynt where as your wyse & olde counceyllours sayd þ ye ne ought not sodenly ne hastely to procede in this nede but þ ye oughten to purueye & apparayle in this caas wyth grete diligence & grete deliberacion truly I trowe they sayden right wysely & right so I For tulle saith in euery nede er thou begynne yet apparayle the wyth grete diligence thā in vengeāce taryng in warre in bataile & i warnestorming er thou begynne I rede þ thou appareylle the therto & do it wyth grete deliberacion For tulle saith þ long apparayling before the batayl maketh short victorye And cassyodre saith þ the garyson is the stronger whan it is longe tyme aduysed But now late vs speke of the counceyl þ was accorded by your neyghebours suche as don you reuerence wythouten loue, your olde enemyes recounsyled. your flatereres þ counceyl you certayn thinges openly. And pryuely counceyl you the contrarye. The yong folke þ counceylle you to auenge you & make warre anon. Certes syr as I haue sayde before, ye haue gretely erred to haue cleped suche maner of folke to your counceyl. which counceyllours ben ynough reproued aforesayd by reason. But neuertheles late vs now descende to the specyall. ye shal first procede after the doctrine of tulius. Certes the trouthe of this matere of this counceyl nedeth not diligently enquyre. For it is wyst wel what they be þ haue don to you this trespaas & vylonye and how many trespassours. & in what maner þ they haue do to you alle this wronge & alle this vylonye. And after this shal ye examyne the second condicion. whether þ the same tulius addeth in thys same mater. For tulius putteth a thing whiche þ he calleth cōsenting. this is to say who ben they & whiche bey they & how many consenting to this counceyl in thy wylfulnes to doo hasty vengeāce. And lete cōsider also who be they & how many be they þ cōsenteden to your aduersaryes. & certes as to the first poynt it is well knowen whiche folke they be that cōsented to your hasty wylfulnes. For certes alle tho that counceylled you to make sodeyn warre be not your frendes Lete vs now consydere whiche be they þ ye holde̅ so gretely your frendes as to your persone. For al be it so þ ye be so myghty & riche Certes ye be but allone. For ye haue no child but a doughter. Ne ye haue noo bretheren ne susyns Germans ne none other nyghe kynrede. wherfor þ your enemyes for drede sholde stynte to plete with you or distroyen your persone. ye knowe also þ your rychesses must be despended in dyuerse partes & whan þ euery wyght hath hys parte they ne wyl take but lytyl rewarde to vengen your deth.

But your nemies ben thre and they haue many chyldren. Bretheren

Cosyns. And other nyghe kynrede. And though so were that thou haddest slayn two or thre of them. yet dwellen there ynough to wreken her deth and to slee thy persone. And though so be that youre kynrede be more spleer and stedfast than the kinrede of your aduersaryes. yet neuertheles youre kynrede nys but after kynrede they be but lytyl subget to yow And the kynrede of youre enemyes ben nyghe sybbe to them. And certes as ny that her condycion is better than yours. Than lete vs considere also yf that the counceyl of hem that conceil yow to take sodeyn vengeaunce wheter it accord to reson or noo. And certes ye knowe wel nay For as be right or reason there may no man take vengeance ony no wyght but the Juge that hath the Jurisdiction of it. whan it is graunted hym to take that vengeance hastely or attemperatly as the lawe requireth. And yet more ouer of that word that Tulyus sayth and cleped cõcentyng thou shalt conspdere yf thy myght & thy power may consente and suffyse to thy wylfulnes and to thy conceyl foure. & etes thou maist wel say nay For sikerly as for to speke properly we may doo no thing but only suche thinges as we may do rightfully And certes thou mayst rightfully take vengeance. as of your propre auctoryte. Than may ye se that your power ne consenteth ne accordeth your wylfulnes. Lete vs eyamyne the thyrd poynt that tulius clepeth consequent. thou vnderstonde þ the vengeance that thou purposest to take is consequent. And therfor folowyth a nother vengeance peryl and warre and other dommages wythout nõbre of whiche we be not warre as at this tyme. and as touchyng the fourthe parte þ tulĩ clepeth engendring Thou shalt conspdere þ this wrong whiche is don to the. is engendryd of the hate of thyn enemyes & of vengeance takyng vpon hym thei wold engendre a nother vengeance & more sorowe and wofulnesse of richesses as I sayd before. Now syre as to the fyfte poynt. whiche that tulius clepeth cause which is the last point thou shal vnderstonde þ alle wrong that thou hast receyued hath certain causes whiche that clerkes clepen ryens and effycyente & causa longinqua and causa propynqua. The is to saye the fer cause & the nyghe cause The fer cause is alle myghtyeste þ is cause of alle thynges. The neer cause is thy thre enemyes. The cause accydental was hate. The cause materialle is the fyue wounded of thy doughter. The cause formal is the cause of her wordynge þ broughten ladders and clomben in at the wyndowes. The cause fynal was to slee thy doughter it letted not in as moche as in hem was. But for to speke of this fynall cause as what ende they shal come or what shal fynally betyde of hem in this cas Ne can I not deme but by conjecturyng & supposyng For we shal suppose that

they shal come to a wrecched ende. by cause that the book of the decres saith Dede or with grete payn be causes brought to a good ende. whan they be bodly begonne Now syre yf men wold aske me why that god suffreth men to do this vylonye certes I can not wel answere as for no sothfastnes For thapostle sayth. That the science and the Jugementys of our lorde god almyghty been ful depe. There may no man comprehende ne serche hem sufficiently. Neuertheles by certayn presumpcions & conjecturyng I holde and beleue that wyght that is ful of Justice and rightfulnesse hath suffryd this to betyde by Just cause & resonable. Thy name is melibee. This is to saye a mā that dryncketh hony. thou hast dronke so moche hony of swete temporel richesses and delyces of honour of this worlde ỳ thou art dronke & hast forgoten Jhū crist thy creatour Thow ne hast doon to hym suche honour and reuerence as thow oughtest. Ne thou ne hast take kepe of the wordes of Dyde ỳ saith Under the hony of the goodes of the body is hyd venym that sleth the soule. And salamon saith yf thou hast founde hony ete of it that suffyseth. For yf thou ete of it out of mesure. thou shalt spewe. and be nedy and poure. and parauenture Crist hath the in despyte. & hath torneth a way fro the his face and his misericorde. And so he hath suffrid that thou hast be punysshed in the maner that how hast trespaced. Thow hast don synne agayn our lorde Thesu crist. For certes the thre enemyes of mankynde that is to saye the fleesshe the fende and the worlde thou hast suffryd hem for to entre in to the herte wylfullye by the wyndowes of thy body. And hast not defendeth thy self sufficiently agaynst her assaultes & her temptacions. so that they haue wounded the soule in fyue places that is to saye the dedely synnes that been entred in to thy herte be the fyue wyttes: And in this maner our lorde thū crist hath suffred that thy thre enmyes be entryd in to thy hous by the wyndowes. And haue wounded thy doughter in the maner aforsayd.

Certes sayd Melibee I see wel ỳ ye enforce yow myself by wordes to ouercome me in suche maner as I shal not venge me of myn enmyes shewyng me the peryl & the cuyl that myght be falle of this vengeaunce. But who so wold consydere in alle vengeaunces the peril and the cuyl that myght sewe of vengeaunce taking a man wold neuer take vengeaunce and ỳ were harme for by vengeaunce taking ben wrecched men dessended fro the good men. And they that haue wyl to do wrecchednes restreyne her wrecched purpoos whan they see the punysshyng and the chastysyng of the trespassours And yet saye I more. ỳ right as by synguler presumpcyon he synneth in takyng vengeance of a nother man Right soo synneth the Juge yf he take not & doo vengeance on hem that it haue deserued.

Seneke saith thus. That mayster is good he sayth that reprouyth shrewes. And cassyodre sayth a man dredeth to doo outragyously whan he woot and knoweth that it displeseth the Juges and souerayns. and another sayth The Juge that dredeth to doo right maketh shrewes. ¶ saint poule thapostle sayth how he wryteth to the romayns that the Juges bere not the spere wythout cause But they bere it to punysshe the shrewes and mysdoers. And for to defende the good men. yf ye wyl take vengeance on your enmyes ye shall retourne and haue your recours to the Juge that hath the Jurysdiction vpon hem and ye shal punysshe hem as the lawe ayed ¶ requyreth.

a Sayd Melibe this vengeance lyketh me no thynge. I bethynke me nowe ¶ take hede how that fortune hath norisshed me fro my chyldhode and holpe me to passe many a straunge paas Now wol I assaye in her frowynge wyth goddes helpe that shal me saue for to venge. certes sayd prudence yf ye wyl werke by my conseyl ye shal not assaye fortune by no waye. ne ye shalle not lene ne borwe vnto her after the worde of seneke. For thynges that ben folysly don and that bee doon in hope of fortune shall neuer come to good ende. And as to the same seneke sayth the more clere and the more shynyng that fortune is. the more brotyl. and the sonner broken she is. Truste ye not in her. For there nys no stedfastnes ne stablenes in her. For whan thou trowest to be moste sure and syker of her. She wyl faylle and deceyue the. And where as ye sayn þ fortune hath nôrysshid you in youre chyldhode. I say that there is so myche the lasse truste in your wille. For seneke sayth what man that is norysshed by fortune she maketh hym a fool. Now sythen ye desyren ¶ axe vengeance. And the vengeance that is doon after the lawe and before the Juge lyketh not yow. And the vengeance that is doon in hope of fortune is perylous and vncertayn. than haue ye no remedye but for to haue your recours vnto the souerayn Juge that vengeth al vylonyes ¶ wronges. and he shal venge yow after þ hym self wyl semeth wel as he saith .leue ye the vengeance vnto me and I shalle do hit.

m Melibee answerd yf I venge me not of the vylonye þ men haue don vnto me I sommone and warne hem that haue don to me this vylonye and al other to doo me vylonye. For it is wrytten yf thou takest no vengeãce of a old vylonye. thou somonest thy aduersarye to do the a newe vylonye. Also for my suffisaunce men wolde doo me so grete vylonye þ I myght not bere it ne fynde it ¶ then sholde I be put ¶ holde ouer lowe. For men sayn in myldyl suffrynge shal many thynges falle vnto the whiche thou ne shalt nowe suffre.

and Iugement / in the myght and power of his enemyes. For salamō sayth Beleue me and yeue credence to that I shal saye. ne yeue neuer the power ne gouernaunce of thy goodes. to thy sone. to thy wyf. to thy frende ne to thy broder. ne yeue thou myght ne mayster ouer thy body whyl lest thou lyuest. Now syth that he defendeth that a man sholde not yeue to his broder ne to his frende the myght of his body by a strenger reason he defendeth a man to yeue hym to his enemye And neuertheles I conceyl you þ ye mystrust not my lord. For I wote wel and knowe verrely that he is debonayr. mekē large and curteys and nothyng desyrous ne coueytous of goodne riches. For there is nothing in this worlde þ he desyreth more than worship and honour. Forthermore I knowe and am full sure that he nothing shal doo in this dede without my counceyl. And I shal so werke in this cas that by the grace of our lord god ye shal be reconcepylled vnto vs. Than sayd they with one voys. Worshipful lady we put vs / our goodes in youre wyl and disposicion alle fully. And be redy for to come what day that it lyke to your noblesse to assygne vs for to make our obligacions / bondes also strouge as it shal lyke vnto your goodnes that we may we fulfyl le the wyl of yow / of my lord Melibee. whan dame prudence had herd the answers of thyse men. She bad hem retorne pryuely. And she retorned ageyn to her lord melibe / tolde hym how she fonde his aduersaryes ful repentant knowlechyng ful lowly her synnes and trespaas and how that they were redy to suffre all payne requyryng hym of mercy and pyte. Than sayd melibe he is well worthy to haue pardon and forgeuenes that excuseth hym not of his synne. But knowlecheth and repenteth hym ayeyng Indulgence for his synne. Senek sayth There is the remyssyon and forgeuenes. For the confession is nyghbour to Innocence. And therfor I assente and conforme to haue pees. But it is good that we doo not without the wyl of oure frendes.

Than was Prudence ryght glad / Ioyful and sayde Certes syre ye haue wel and goodly answerde. For right as by the counceyl assente / helpe of youre frendes ye haue styrped to doo venge you and make warre ryght so without counceyl shalle ye not accorde you ne haue pees with youre aduersaryes. For the lawe sayth there is no thynge soo good by waye of kynde as a thyng to be vnbounde by hym that it was bounde. And than dame Prudence without delaye or tarying sent anon her messagers for her kyn and her olde frendes whiche were trewe and wyse. And tolde hem by ordre in presence of melibe al this mater as is aboue expressyd and declared. And prayed hem that they wolde saye her aduyse and counceylle what were beste to doo in this nede. And whan

we thynke and conſyderē þ we haue deſerued to haue them . ⁊ ſayn̄t Gregory ſayth. that whan a man conſydereth wel the nombre of his defaultes and ſynnes. the paynes and trybulacions that he ſuffreth ſemeth the laſſe to hym. ⁊ in as moche as hym thynketh his ſynnes more heuy and grenous in ſo moche ſemeth his payne more lyghter and eſyer to hym. Alſo ye oughten to enclyne and bowe your herte to take the pacience of our lord Jhū cryſte as ſayth ſayn̄t Peter in his epyſtles. Jheſu Cryſte he ſayth that ſuffred for vs and yaf enſample to euery man to folowe ⁊ ſue hym for he dyd neuer ſynne. Ne neuer cam ther out of his mouth vylenes worde: whan men curſid hym he curſed hem not. And whan men beten hym. he manaſced hem not. alſo the grete pacyence þ ſayntes whiche that ben in paradyſe haue had in trybulacions that they haue ſuffred wythouten her deſerte or gylte ought moche ſtyrte your pacience. For ye ſhold enforce yow to haue pacience.

Conſyderyng the trybulacions of this worlde that lytyl whyle endureth and ſone paſſyth and goeth. and the Joye that a man ſeketh by pacience in trybulacions is perdurable. After that the Apocalyps ſayth in his epiſtle. The ioye of god he ſayth is perdurable that is to ſaye euerlaſtyng. alſo trowe ye wel and elle beleue ſtedfaſtly that he is not wel norriſſhed ne wel taught that wyl not haue pacience. ne wyl not receyue pacyence. For ſalomon ſayth That the doctryne of a man and the wytte is knowen by pacyence. And in another place he ſayth þ he that is pacyēt gouerneth hym by grete in prudence. ⁊ the ſame Salamon ſayth The angry and the wrathfulman maketh noyſes. And the pacient man atempreth hym ⁊ ſtylleth hym. he ſayth alſo. it is more worth to be pacient thenne for to be right ſtronge. And he that may haue the lordſhip of his owen hert is more to prayſe than by his force or ſtrengthe taketh grete cytees. And therfore ſaith ſaint Jame in his epiſtle That pacyence is a grete vertue of perfection. Certes ſayd Melibee I graunte dame Prudence that pacience is a grete vertu of perfection. But euery man may not haue the perfection that ye ſeye . ne I am none of þ nombre of right perfight men. For my herte may neuer be in pees vnto the tyme that it be vengyd ⁊ al be it ſoo that it was grete peryl to myne enemyes to doo me a vylonye in taking vengeance vpon me: yet toke they no hede of the peryl but fulfylled their wycked wyl and corage. And therfor me thinketh men ought not to repreue me. though I put me in a lytyl peryl for to venge me. And theugh I do a grete exceſſe. That is to ſaye that I a venge one outrage by a nother.

Sayde dame prudence ye ſay your wylle as you lyſteth But in no caas of the

worlde of a man shold not do outrage ne excesse for to venge hym. For casshodre saith that as cruel doth he that avengeth hym by outrage as he that doth the outrage. And therfor ye shal venge yow after the ordre of right. þ is to say by the lawe. not by excesse ne by oultrage & also if ye wil venge you of the oultrage of youre aduersaryes in other maner. ye sinne. & therfor sayth seneck þ a mā shal neu vengeshrewdnes by shrewdnes and yf that ye saye that right ayed a man to defende vyolence by vyolence. and fyghtyng by fyghtyng. Certes ye saith soth. whan the defence is doon anon wythouten interual or wythouten tarying or delay for to defende hym and not for to venge hym. And yet behoueth that a man put suche temperaunce in his defence that men haue no cause ne matere to reproche hym that defendeth hym of oultrage or excesse. For elles were it agayn reson Parde ye knowe wel that ye make no defence as now for to defende yow. but for to venge yow. And so sueth it that ye haue to wyl to do your wyl attemperatly.

And therfor me thynketh that pacience is good. For salamon sayth. þ he that is not pacient shal haue grete harme.

Certes said melibe I graūte yow whan a man is impacient and wroth of that whiche touched hym not & that appertayneth not to hym. though it hurte hym it is no wonder. For the lawe saith that he is culpable that entermyneth or medleth of thyng that appertayneth not to hym. And salamon saith. That he that entermeteth hym of the noyse of stryf of another man. Is lyke to hym that taketh a strāge houd by the eeres. For right as he that taketh a strange hound by the eeres. he is otherwhyle biten with the hound. Right in the same wyse. it is reson that he haue harme that by his Impacience medleth hym of the noyse of another mā where as it appertayneth not to hym. But ye knowe wel that this dede that is to say my grief and my desire toucheth me right nygh. and therfore though I be wrothe and Impacient it is noo meruayl. And sauyng your grace I can not see that I shold gretly harme me though I toke vengeance. For I am riche & more myghty thā myn enemyes ben and it is wel knowen that by money and hauyng grete possessyons ben al thynges of this worlde governed. And also salamon sayth that alle thyse thynges obeyen to money. whan prudence had herde her husbond avaunte hym of his richesse and of his money dispraysing the power of his enemyes she spake and sayd in this wyse. certes dere syr I graunte yow that ye be riche and mighty. And that richesses ben good to hem that haue geten hem wel and that wel can vse them. for right as the body of a man may not lyue without the soule. nomore may the lyf wythout temporel goodes And by richesse may a man gete hym grete frendes. and therfore sayth pamphyles yf an erles doughter be ryche he

sayth she may chese of a thousand men whom she wyll take to her husbond. For of a thousand men one wyll not forsake her. And this pamphyles sayth also. yf that thou be ryght happy that is to saye yf thou be ryche thou shalt fynde a grete nombre of felawes and frendes. And yf thy fortune chaunge farewel frendship and felauship for thou shalt be alone wythout ony companye. but yf it be the companye of poure folke. & yet sayth this pamphyles more ouer that they that ben bonde and thrall of lynage shal be made worthy and noble by richesse. And right so as by richesse there comen many goodes. right so by pouerte there comen many harmes and euyllys. And therfor depeth cassyodre pouerte the moder of ruyne that is to saye the moder of ouerthrowyng or of fallyng doun And therfore sayth Peter alfons one of the greteste aduersyteys of thys world is whan a freman of lynde or of byrthe is constrayned by pouerte to ete the almesse of his enemye. And the same sayth Innocence in one of his bookes that sorouful and myshappy is the condycion of a poure beggar. For yf he aye not his mete. he dyeth for houngre & yf he aye he dyeth for shame. and algate necessyte constreyneth hym to aye. And therfor sayth salamon That better it is to dye than to haue suche pouerte. And as the same Salamon sayth better it is to dye a byttter deth than to lyue suche a lyf: By these resons & I haue sayd vnto yow and by many other that I coude say I graunte that richesse ben good to them that gete hem wel and to tho that vse wel thys rychesse. And therfor wyll I shewe yow. how ye shal behaue yow in gadryng of your richesse. & in what maner ye shal vse them. Fyrst ye shal gete hem wythouten grete desyr by good leyzer soberly and not ouer hastely. For a man that is to desyrying in getyng ryches haboundeth hym first to thefte and to alle other myschewes. And therfor sayth salamon he that hasteth hym to besily to waxe riche he shal be none Innocent he sayth also that the riches that hastely cometh to a man soon and haste ly goth and passeth from a man But that riches that cometh lytyl & lytyl wexit alway and myltyplyeth And therfor ye shalle gete ryches by your wytte and by your trauayl vnto your prouffyt. And that wythouten wrong or harme doyng to ony other persone. For the lawe sayth that maketh no man hym self riche yf he doo harme to another wyght. This is to saye that nature defendeth and forbedeth by ryght that no man make hym riche vnto the harme of another persone. And tullyus sayth that no sorowe ne dred of dethe ne of thinge that may befalle vnto a man is so moche agayn nature as a man to encreece his owen prouffit to the harme of another man. & though ye grete and myghty men gete ryches more lyghtly than thou. yet shalt thou

alle wyse fle ydlenes For salamon
sayth That he that trauayleth in ydle-
nes techeth a man to doo many cuyl-
les. And the same salamon sayth. he
that trauaylleth and besyeth hym to
tylle his londe shal ete brede. And he
that is ydle and casteth hym to noo
besynes ne occupacion shall falle in
to pouerte & dye for hungre And he þ
is ydle & slowe can neuer fynde conue
nable tyme for to doo his prouffyt.
For ther is a versefyar sayth. that the
ydle man excuseth hym in wynter
by cause of the grete colde & in som-
mer by encheson of hete. For thyse
causes sayth caton waketh & enfy-
neth you not ouer myche to slepe.
For ouer moche reste norysshith and
causeth many vyces. & therfor sayth
Seynt Jerome doth some good de-
des þ the deuyl whiche þ is your ene-
myc fynd you not vnoccupyed. For
the deuyl taketh not lyghtly to his
worchyng suche as he fyndeth occupi
ed in good werke. Than thus in ge-
tyng of richesse ye must flee ydlenes
And afterward ye shal vse the riches
whiche ye haue goten by your wytte
& by your trauayl in suche maner þ
men hold yow not to scarce ne to spa
ryng ne to fool large that is to saye
ouer large a spender For right as
men blame an auaryclous man by
cause of his scarsenes & chyncherye. in
the same wyse is he to blame þ spen
deth ouer largely And therfor
caton saith Vse thy ryches that thou
hast goten in suche maner as men
haue no mater ne cause to say ne cal
le the neyther wretche ne chyrche. for
it is a grete shame to a man to haue
a poure herte & a riche purs. he saith
also the goodes that thou hast goten
vse them by mesure þ is to say spend
them mesurably For they that folysly
spende & waste the goodes that they
haue. whan they haue nomore pro-
prete of theyr owen. they shapen them
to take the goodes of other men I say
than that ye shal flee auarice vsyng
your rychesse in suche maner that
men saye not that youre rychesses is
deuoured. But that ye haue them in
your myght & in your welding. For
the wyse man reproueth the auarici-
ous man and sayth thus in two ver-
ses. wherto and why buryeth a man
his owen goodes by his grete auary
ce & knoweth wel þ nedes must he die
For deth is the ende of euery man as
in this present lyf. & for what cause &
encheson Joyneth or knytteth he
hym so fast to his godes þ al his wyt
tes mowe not desseuere ne departe
hym from his goodes. And knoweth
wel or oweght to knowe that whan
he is dede he shal nothyng bere with
hym out of this world. And therfor
sayth saint Augustyn. That the aua
ryclous man is lykened vnto helle.
þ the more it swolowe the more hit de
spreth to swolowe and to deuoure.
And as wel as ye wold eschew to be
called an auaricious man or a chin-
che as wel shold ye kepe yow & go-
uerne yow in suche wyse that men.
not be ydle. But shewe to
doo thy prouffyt. For thou shalt in

ꝛepe pow not foollo.ge.
Therfo: sayth Tulyus the goodes be opened by pyte and by debonayr-te that is to saye to yeue hym parte þ haue grete nede. Ne thy goodes shold not be so open to be euery mannes goodes Afterward in geting of your rycheſſe and vsyng hem ye shal alle-way haue thre thinges in your herte That is to saye our lord god. goode consience. and good name. First ye shal haue god in your herte. And for no ryches ye shal doo no thyng whi-che may in ony maner wyse displese god that is our creatour and ma.ke.r

After the word of Salamon. it is better to haue a lytyl good wyth the loue of god than for to haue moche golde ond tresour and to lese the loue of his lord god. And the ꝓphete saith that better it is to be a good man ꝛ haue lytyl good and tresour than to be holde a shrewe and haue grete ry-cheſſe. And yet say I furthermore þ ye shal alway do your besynes to ge te yow ryches so þ ye gete them wyth good conscience. And the apposile sayth that there nys nothyng in this world of whiche we shal haue so gre te Ioye as whan our cõsience berith vs good wytnes. And the wyse man sayth that the substaunce of a man is ful good whan synne is not in mannes conscience. Afterward in geting of your rytheſſe and in vsing of them ye must haue grete besynes and dyligence that your good name be alway kept and conserued. For Salamon sayth That better is and more it auayleth a man for to haue a good name than for to haue ma-ny ryches. And therfo: he saith in an other place. doo grete dyligence in kepyng of thy frende and in kepynge of thy good name. For it shal lenger abyde wyth the than ony other tre-sour: be it neuer so precious ꝛ certes he shold not be called a gentylman þ after god and good conscience alle thinges left ne doth to kepe his good name. And Cassyodre sayth that hit is synge of a gentylle herte whan a man soueth and despreth to haue a good name. And therfore saith saint Augustyn. that ther be two thynges that be necessarye and nedeful. that is good consience and good loos. And he that trusteth hym so myche in his good consience that he des-pyseth and setteth at nought his good name or loos he doth not well. For he that reketh not to kepe his good name nys but a cruel chorle.

Syre now haue I shewed yow how ye shold do in getyng of ryches and how ye sholde vse hem.
And I see wel that for the truste that ye haue in your ryches ye wolde me-ue warre and bataylle. I counceylle yow that ye begyn no warre in truste of your riches. For they suffyse not warres to mayntene. ꝛ therfo: sayth a phylosophre that man that desy-reth algate ꝛ wyl haue warre. shal neu haue suffysaunce For the ryches þ he is the grettre dyspence muste he of thyn hous ne shold not be hyd ne kepte so cloos but that they myght

make yf he wyl haue worshyp and wyctorye. And salamon sayth That the grete ryches ꝑ a mã hath the more dyspence he hath And therfore al he it so that by fortune ꝛ ryches ye may haue many folke. yet behoueth it not ne it is not good to begynne warre. where that ye may haue in other maner pees vnto your worshyp ꝛ prouffyt. For the victoryes that ben of bataylle in this world ben not in grete nombre and multytude of people ne in vertu of man. But it lyeth in the wyl and in the hand of our lord thū god almyghty. And therfor Judas machabe⁹ whiche that was goddes knyghte. whā he shold fyght agaynste hys aduersaryes that had a gretter nombre and gretter multytude of people and strenger than was the peple of Machabee. yet he recomforted his lytyl peple and sayd tyght in this wyse. Also lyghtly sayd he may our lord god yeue victorye to a fewe folke as to many folke. For the victorye of a batayl cometh not by a grete nombre of people but hit cometh from our lord god of heuen. And dere syr for as moche as there is noo man certayn that he be worthy that god wyl yeue hym victorye or not. Salamon saith Therfor euery man shold gretely drede werres to begynne and by cause that in batayll falle many perylls. And happeth otherwhyle ꝑ also sone is a grete mãs slayn as a lytyl man And as is wryton in the second booke of kynges. The dedes of batayl been venturous and nothyng certayn. For as lyghtly is one hurte with a spere as a nother And forther is grete paryl in warre therfor shold a man eschewe and flee warre in as myche as a man may goodly. For salamon sayth he that loupth paryl shal fal in paryl: After that dame prudence had spoken in this mater Melibee answerde and said I se wel dame prudence that by fayr wordes ꝛ by youre resons that ye haue shewed me. that warre lyketh yow nothyng. but I haue not herde yet in this counceylle. how I shalle doo in this nede. Certes sayde she I counceyl yow that ye accorde with your aduersaryes that ye haue pees with them For saint iame saith in his epystles. That by accorde and pees the smale ryches waxe grete. And by debate and dyscorde the grete richesse fallen doun and fayllen.

And ye knowe wel that one of the greteste and most souerayn thyng ꝑ is in this world is vnyte ꝛ pees. and therfor sayth our lorde Jhū crist to his apostles in this wyse wel happy and blyssid be tho that loven and purchacen pees. For they be called chyldren of god A sayd melibee ne w see I wel ꝑ ye loue not myn honoure ne worshyp. ye knowen that myn aduersaryes haue begonne this debate And ye see wel that they ne requyre ne praye me of pees ne they axe not to be reconcyelled wold ye than that I goo ꝛ meke me ꝛ obeye me vnto hem ꝛ crye hem mercy For sothe ꝑ were not my worshyp. For tyght as

men sayn ouergrete rubbenes engen
dryth grete dispaiyinge so shold it
fare by me / / doyng this grete humi
lyte or meknes. Than began pru
dence to make semblaunte of wrath
and sayd syr saue your grace. I lo
ue your honour & your prouffight
as I doo myn owen and euer haue
doo neyther ye ne none other saue
neuer the contrarye. & yet yf I had
sayd that ye sholde haue purchased
your pees and the reconciliacion I
ne had myster myscaped ne sayd a
mys. For the wyse man sayth. The
dyssencion begynneth by a nother
man. And the reconcepling by him
self begynneth: And the prophete
sayth flee shrewdenes and doo good
nes seke pees & folowe it in as my
ster as i the is. yet say I not þ ye shal
rather pursiewe to your aduersary
es for pees. than they shal to yow.
For I knowe wel ynought that ye
be so harde of herte that ye wyl doo
no thyng for me. And salomon saith
that he that hath ouer harde an her
te he at leste shal myshappe and myss
tyde. whan Melibe had herde dame
prudence make semblaunte of wra
the he sayd in this wyse. Dame I
praye yow that ye be not displesid of
of thynges that I saye. For ye kno
we wel that I am angry & wroth &
that is no wonder And they that ben
wroth wote not wel what they doen
ne what they sayn. Wherfor the pro
phete saith that troubled eyen haue no
clere syght. But saye ye and counceyl
me as yow good lyketh. For I am re
dy to do right so ca ye wyl desyre
And yf ye wil reuoke me of my folie
I am to more holden to loue yow &
to prayse yow. For salamon sayth.
He that reproueth hym that doth so
lye he shal synde grettter grace then
he that dysseyueth hym with swete
wordes. Than sayde dame prude
ce I make no semblaunt of wrathe
ne of angre but for your prouffyt.
For salamon sayth. he is more wra
the that reproueth or chydeth a fool
for his folye shewyng hym samblau
te of wrath than he that supporteth
hym and preyseth hym in his myscdo
yng and lawyth at his folye. And
this same salamon sayth afterward
þ by the sorouful vysage of a man
that is to saye by the sory & they heup
tenaunce of a man the fool corre
cteth hym self & amendeth Than said
melibe I shal not con answere yow
vnto so many fayr resons as ye haue
put to me and shewed. Saye shortly
your wyl and your counceyl and I
am redy to performe and fulfylle it
Than dame prudence dyscouered al
her wyl vnto hym and sayd I counce
yl yow aboue alle thynge that ye
make pees betwene god and yow.
and be ye reconcepylled vnto hym &
to his grace. For as I haue sayd a
fore. God haue suffryd yow to haue
al this tribulacion & desese for youre
synnes. And yf ye doo as I saye you
God wyl sende your aduersaryes
vnto yow and make hem falle at
your fet redy to do your wil & your
comaundementes. For salamon sayth

whan the condicion of a man is pleſaunt and lyking to god. he chaun geth the hertes of the mannys aduerſaryes and conſtreyneth hem to beſeke hym of pees and of grace And I praye yow lete me ſpeke with your aduerſaryes pryuely. For they ſhal not knowe that it be your wylle or your aſſente. and than whan I knowe her wyl and her entente I may counceyle yow the more ſewrely. Dame ſayd Melleebee do your wyl and your lyking for I put me onely in your diſpoſicion and ordynaunce.

Than whan dame prudence ſawe the good wyl of her huſbond delyberyd and to ke aduyſe in her ſelf. thynking how ſhe myght bryng this nede to a good concluſion and to a good ende. And whan ſhe ſawe her tyme ſhe ſent for thyſe aduerſaryes to come to her in to a preuy place. And ſhewed wyſely vn to them the grete goodnes that come of pees. and the grete harmes and paunles that ben in warre and ſayd to hem in a goodly maner. how that they oughten to haue grete repentaunce of the Iniurye and wronge that they had doon vnto melleebe her lord and her doughter.

And whan they herde the wordes of dame prudence they were ſo enſpyred and raupſſhed and had ſo grete Ioye of her that wonder was to telle A lady ſayd they ye haue ſhewid vnto vs the bleſſyng of ſwetnes after the ſawe of dauyd the ypphete for the reconcelling whiche that we be not worthy to haue in no manere. but we aughten to requyre it with grete contricion and humylite. that of your grete goodnes haue preſented vnto vs. Now ſee we wel that the ſcripture and the conning of Salamon is ful trewe he ſayd that ſwete wordes multyplyen and encreſen frendes and make fiers to be debonayr and meke. Certes ſayd they we put al our dede and al our mater and cauſe. hoolly in youre good wyl. And be redy to obeye to the commaundement of my lord melleebe. And dere and benygne lady we praye you and beſeche you as meke ly as we can that it lyke vnto your grete goodnes to fulfyllen in dede your wordes goodly. For we conſyderen and knowleche that we haue offendyd and gryuyd my lord melleebe out of meſure ſo forforth that we be not of power to make hym amendys And therfor we oblygen vs and byn de vs and our frendes for to done al his wylle and comaundementis. But peraventure he hath ſuche angre and ſuche wrath to vs warde by cauſe of our offence. that he wol enoyne vs ſuche payne that we may not bere it ne ſuſteyne it. And therfore noble lady we beſeche your noble pyte to take ſuche auyſement in this nede that we ne our frendes be not diſheryted and diſtroyed thourgh our folye.

Certes ſaid dame prudence it is a harde thing and right perylous that a man put hym ſelf al vtterly in arbytracion

Certes sayd dame Prudence I graunte you wel that ouer moche suffraunce is is not good But yet hit folowth not therof þ every persone to whom men doo vylonye to take of it venge aunce. For that appertepneth and longeth al only to the Juges. For they shalle venge the vylonyes and the Iniurpes. & therfor the two auctoutees that ye haue sayd tofore bee alonely vndersto̅de in the Juges for whan ye suffre ouer many wronges and vylonyes to be be don wythou ten punysshing they semen not a mā to doo only newe wronges but they commaū den hym and bydden hym to do synne. And the soueraynes and the Juges in theyr contrarye so my ghtyl suffre of the shrewes and mysdo ers. that they shold by suche suffrau ce and by proces of tyme wayen of suche power & myght that they shold put out the Juges & the soueraynes from thre places. And at the laste to make hem to lese thier lordshipes but lete vs now put that. that ye haue le ue to venge. I say ye be not of my ght ne power as now to venge yow For yf ye wyl make comparyson vnto the myght of your aduersary e. ye shal synde in many thynges þ I haue shewed yow or this. that her condycion is better than youres. & therfor say I that it is good as now that ye suffre and be pacient. Forther more ye knowe wel that after the co men sawe. it is a wodenes to a man to stryue wyth a more myghty man thā he is hym self & for to striue with a mā of euen strethe. þ is to say with a man that is as strong as hym self hit is grete peryl. And for to stryue wyth a wayker than hym it is folye And ther for shold a man flee stry uyng as myghtyl as he myght. For sa lamon sayth hit is a grete worshipp to a man to kepe hym fro noyse & stryf And yf so happe that a man of grettet myght & strenthe than thow arte doo the greuaunce studye and besye the rather to stynte the greuan ce. thā for to venge. For sen. ke sayth That he putteth hym in grete peryll that stryueth wyth a grettet man than he is hem self. And caton sayth that yf a man of hyer estate or degre or of more myght than thou art do the anoye or greuaunce suffre hym. For that ones hath greued the many another tyme releue the and help the yet set I caas that ye haue a ryghte for to venge yow. yet ought you to take hede to al thyse thynges afore sayd er that ye take vengeance. For I say that there be ful many thyn ges that shalle restrayne yow of ven geance taking and make yow for to enclyne to suffre and to haue pati ence in the wronges þ haue be doen. Fyrst and forward and yf ye wylle consydere the defautes that been in your owen persone. For whiche de fautes god hath suffred yow to ha ue al this tribulacō as I haue sayd before to yow. For the poete sayth. That we oughten pacyently to take the tribulacions þ comen to vs whā

Melleebes frendes had herde this ne
de and taken her aduyse and deybe-
racion of the forsaid mater and had
examyned by grete besynes & grete
counceyl. thy pas ful counceyl for to
haue pees and reste. And that melle-
bee ſhold receyue with good herte his
aduersaryes to forgeuenes and mer-
cy. And whan dame prudence had
herd thassent of her lord mellebe and
of hys frendes. she was wonderly
glad in her herte and sayd there is a
noble prouerbe that sayth the good-
nes that thou mayst do this day do
it and abeyde not ne delaye it not tyl
to morowe And therfor I counceyl ȳ
ye sende your messagers suche as be
discrete and wyse vnto your aduer-
saryes: Telling hem on your behalf
that yf they wyl treete of pees and of
accorde that they shape hem wyth-
out delay or taryeng to come vnto
vs whiche thyng performed was in
dede. And whan these trespassours &
repentyng folke of her folyes that is
to saye the aduersaryes of mellebee.
had herd what thyse messagers sayd
vnto hem. they were right glad and
Joful. and answerd ful meekly and
benygnly yeldyng graces and than-
kes to her lord mellebe & to al his cō-
panye. and shopen hem wythout de-
lay to go wyth the messagers and to
obey the comaundement of her lord
Mellebe. And right anon they tooke
her waye to her lord mellebee. And
right anon the tooke her waye to her
lordes courte & tooke wyth hem som-
me of her true frendes to make feyth
for hem & for to be her borowes.

And whan they were comen to the
presence of mellebee he sayd to hem
thyse wordes. Hit ſtondeth thus say-
de Mellebee & soth it is that causeles
and wythouten skyl & reson ye haue
don grete Iniurye to me to my wif
prudence and to my doughter also.
For ye haue entryd in to my hous
by vyolence & haue doon suche out-
trage that al men knowe wel that ye
haue deserued deth. & therfor wolde
I knowe of you whether ye wyl put
te yow to punyſshyng & the chasting
& the vengeāce of his oultrage in the
wyl of me & of my wyf or elles not.

Than the wyſest of hem three
t answerd for hem alle and
sayde. Syr sayde he we
knowe wel that we be vnworthy to
come to the courte of so grete a lorde
and so worthy as ye be. For we haue
so grevely myſtaken vs and haue
offended and gylted in suche wyse a-
gayns your hye lordship that treu-
ly we haue deserued the deth: but yet
for the grete goodnes and debonayr
te that alle the worlde wytnesseth of
your persone. we submytte vs to the
excellence & benignyte of your grā
ous lordship. and beseching you of
your mercyable pite ye wyl cōsider
our grete repentaūce & our lowe sub
myssyon & graūte vs forgeuenes of
our oultrageous trespaas and of-
fenſis. For wel we
knowen that youre lyberal grace &
mercy stretchen ferther in to goodnes
than doon our oultrageous gyltes.

and treſpaces my to wylfulnes Al be it that curteſly and dampnably we haue agylted and a grouyd youre hye lordſhyp.

Than Melleebee tokē hym from the grounde ful full benygnly and receyued her obligacions and bondes by her o thes vpon her pledges & borowes. & aſſygned hem a certayn daye to retorne vnto her courte for to receyue and accepte the Jugement that melleebee wold cōmaunde to be doon ey hem by the cauſes aforeſayd. Whiche thinges ordeyned euery man retorned to his owen hous. And whan dame prudence ſawe her tyme ſhe feyned & ayed her lord melleebee. What vengeance he thought to take vpon his aduerſaryes. to which melleebe anſwerd and ſayd certes I thynke & purpoſe me fully to dyſheryte hem of alle þ euer they haue and put hem in exyle for euermore. Certes ſayd dame prudence. This were a cruel ſentence & moche agaynſt reſon For ye be riche ynough and haue non nede of other mennes goodes. And ye myght ful lyghtly in this wyſe gete yow a full vertuous name. Whiche is a vertuous thyng and ought to be eſchewed of euery good man. For after the worde of thapoſtle Couetyſe is the rote of alle harmes And therfor it were better to yow to leſe ſo moche good of youre owen than for to take of her good in this maniere. For better it is to leſe good with worſhip than it is to wynne good with vylenye and ſhame. And euery man ought to do his dyligence & beſynes to gete hym a good name. & yet ſhal he not hoely beſye hym in kepyng of his good name. But he ſhal alle way enforce hym to do ſomme thyng by wyche he may renouelle or renowe his good name. For it is wryten that the olde goode loos of a man or good name is ſone gon and paſſid whan it is not renewed ne renouelyd. and as touchinge that ye ſayn. ye wol eyple your aduerſaryes. that thinketh me moche agayn reſon and out of meſure conſyderyng the power that they haue reue von vpon hem ſelf. And yet it is wryten that he is worthy to leſe his p̄yuylege þ myſuſeth the myght and the power that is reue hym And I ſet caas þ ye myght entre hem þ payne by right & by lawe. Whiche þ I trowe ye may not do I ſay ye myght not put it to execucion For paraventure than were it lyke to retorne to the warre as it was before. And therfor yf ye wyl that men doo yow obeyſaūce ye muſt demene you more curteyſly. This is to ſay ye muſt reue more eſy penaūce & Jugement. For it is wryten that he þ moſt curteyſly comaundeth to hym men moſte obeye. & therfor I praye yow þ in this neceſſyte and in this nede ye caſt yow for to ouercome youre herte For ſeneck ſaith. He that ouercometh his herte. ouercometh twyes.

And tullyus ſayth. There is nothynge ſoo comendable in a grete lorde as whan he is debonayre

and melyr. And apperyth hym lyght ly. And I praye yow that ye wyl now forbede to do vengeance in ſuche a maner that youre good name may be kepte and conſerued. And þ men may haue cauſe and mater too prayſe yow of pyte and of mercy. And that ye haue no cauſe to repete yow of thyng that is doon. For Senelre ſayth: he ouercometh anye ryl maner that repeteth hym of his victorye. wherfore I praye yow lete mercy be in youre herte. To theffect & to the entente that god almyghty haue mercy on yow in his laſte Jugement. For ſaynt James ſayth in his epiſtlys Jugement wythout mercy ſhalbe doo to hym that hath noo mercy on an other wyght.

Whan melleebee had herd the grete ſkylles and reſons of dame prudence & her wyſe Informacyons and techynges his herte began tenclyne to the wyll of his wyf conſyderyng her grete entente confermed hym anon and aſſented to werke after her counceylle.

And thanked god of whom procedeth alle goodnes and vertue that hym had ſente a wyf of grete diſcrecyon. And whan the day cam that his aduerſaryes ſhold appere in his preſence. She ſpake to hem ful goodly and ſayd in this wyſe. Al be it ſo that of youre pryde and preſumpcion and hye folye of youre negligence and vnconnynge ye haue myſborne yow and treſpaced vnto me. yet for as mykyl as I ſee youre grete humylyte and that ye be ſory and repentaunte of youre gyltys it conſtrayneth me to doo yow grace and mercy. Wherfor I receyue yow to my grace and forgeue yow vtterly alle the offences Iniuryes and wronges that ye haue doon agenſt me to this effecte and to this ende. that god of his endeles mercy wyl at the day of my deeyng forgeue me my gyltes. that I haue treſpaced to hym in this worlde. For doubteles yf we be ſory and repentaunte for our ſynnes and gyltes. The ſyght of our lord god is ſoo free and ſoo mercyable that he wyl forgyue vs our gyltes and bryngē vs to the blyſſe that neuer ſhalle haue ende Amen.

Here endeth Chaucers Tale of Melleebee and Prudence his wyf & Sophye his doughter of moralyte.

Here begynneth the monkes prologue

WHan endyd was the tale of Melleb
And of prudence and her benignyte
Oure hoost sayd as I am feythfulle man
And by that precious corpus Madrian
I hadde lyuer than a barelle of ale
That good leef my wyf hade herde this tale
For she is nothyng of suche pacience
As was this Melleb eus wyf prudence
By goddes bones whan I bete my knaues
She bryngeth me the grete clobbed staues
And crycth sle the dogges euerichone
And breke bothe backe and euery bone
And if that any nyghboure of myn
Wol nat in chirche to my wyf enclyne
Or be so hardy to her to trespace
Whan she comyth home she rampeth in my face
And crycth false cowarde wreke thy wyf
By corpus dominus I wol haue thy knyf
And thou shalt haue my distaue and go spynne
Fro day to nyght she wol thus begynne
Allas she sayeth that euir I was shape
To wedde a mylhesoppe a cowarde ape
That wol be ouir ledde with euery wighte
Thou darst nat stonde by thy wyues righte
This is my lyf. but if that I wolde fyghte
And ouite at the doze anoy I must me dyghte
And elles I am lost but if that I
Be lyke a wylde lyoun fool hardy
I wote wele she wold do me sle som day
Som nyghboure and than go my way
For I am wariour with knyf in honde

Al be it that I dar nat her withstonde
For she was byg in armes by my feith
That shal he fynde that her myssooth or sayeth
But let vs passe away from this matere
My lorde sir monke he sayd be mery of chere
For ye shalle telle a tale truly
Lo Rouchestre stondeth here fast by
Ryde forth myn owne lorde breke nat our game
But by my trouthe I knowe nat youre name
Whether shalle I calle you my lorde dan John
Or dan Thomas dan robert or dan Albon
Or of what house be ye by youre fader kyn
I bowe to god thou hast a fulle fayre chyn
It is a gentyl pasture there thou gooste
Thou art nat lyke a penaunt or a goost
Upon my feyth thou art som officere
Som worthy Sexteyn or som celerere
For by my fadre soule as to my dome
Thou art a mayster whan thou art at home
No poure cloysterer ne no poure nouyce
But a gouernour wyly and wyse
And therwith of brawne and of bones
A wele farynge persone for the nones
I pray to god yeue him confusioun
That first the brought into religioun
Thou woldest haue be a tredfoule a right
Haddyst thou as grete leue as thou hast myght
To parfourme alle thy lust in engendrure
Thou haddest begoten many a creature
Alas why werist thou so wyde a cope
God gyue me sorowe and I were pope
Nat only thou but euery myghty man
Though he were shore bigh vpon his pan

Shold haue a wyf, for alle this worlde is lorn
Religioun hath take vp alle the corn
Of treddyng and horel men be shrympes
Of feble trees there compth wrechyd ympes
This makith that oure heyres be so slender
And feble that they may nat wele engendre
This makith that oure wyues wol assay
Religyous folke for they may bettre pay
Of venus payementes than may we
God wote no bussheburghes pay ye
But be nat wrothe my lorde thoughe I pley
Ful ofte in game a sothe haue I herde say
This worthy monke tok alle in pacience
And sayd I wol do my diligence
As fer as sowneth into honeste
To tel you a tale or two or thre
And if you lyst to herkyn hedyr warde
I wol you sayn of the lyf of seint Edward
Or elles tragedyes first I wol telle
Of whiche I haue an hundred in my celle
Tragedy is for to telle a certayn storye
As olde bokes makyn memorye
Of them that stondyn in grete prosperite
And is falle out of high degre
In to myser and endith wrechydly
And they been dyuersifyed comonly
Of sey feet whiche men clepen exametron
In prose eke been endyted many one
And in metre many a sondry wyse
Lo this ought ynough to suffise
Now herkneth if you lyst for to here
But first I beseche you in this matere
Though I by ordre tel nat these thynges

Be it of popes Emperoures or kynges
And after their ages as men Writen fynde
But telle them som bifore and som behynde
As it comyth to my remembraunce
Haue me excused of myn ignoraunce

Here endith the monkes prologue
And begynneth his Tale



I Wol be Wayle in maner of tragedy
The harme of them that stonde in high degre
And fylle so that there nas no remedy
To bryng them oute of their aduersite
For certayn When that fortune lyst to fle
Ther may no man of her the cours Witholde
Late noman truste on blynde prosperite
Beware by this ensample yong and olde
At Lucifer though he an aungel Were

And nat a man at him I wol begynne
For thoughe fortune may nat anngel dere
From hight degre yet fyl he for his synne
Doun into helle where he is yet in
O lucifer brightest of aungelles alle
Now art thou sathanas thou mayst nat twyn
Oute of mysery whiche thou arte falle
  Lo Adam in the felde of damascene
With goddes owne fynger wrought was
And nat begoten of mannes sperme vncleene
And welte alle paradise saupng one tre
Hadde neuir worldly man so higth degre
As Adam. tyl he for mysgouernaunce
Wae dryuen oute of his higth prosperite
To laboure and to helle and to myschaunce
  Lo Sampson whiche that was annunciat
By the aungel long or his natiuyte
And was to god almyghty consecrate
And stode in nobles while he myght se
Was neuir suche a nother as was he
To spehe of strengith and therto hardynes
But to his wyues told he his secre
Through whiche he slough him for wrechydnesse
  Sampson this noble and myghty champion
Withoute weppy sane his handes twey
He slough and alle to rent the lyoun
Toward his weddyng walkyng by the wey
His fals wyf coude him so please and pray
Tyl she his counseyl knewe and she vntrue
Vnto his foos his counseyl gan bewray
And him for sohe and tolde an other newe
  An hundred foyes tolde Sampson for ire
And alle their tayles he to gydder bonde

And ſet the foyes tayles alle on fyre
For he in euery tayle put a bronde
And they brent alle the cornes of that londe
And theire olyues and theire Wynes ehe
A thouſand men ehe he ſlough With his honde
And hadde no Weppn but an aſſes chehe
  Whan they Were ſlayn ſo thriſted him that he
Was Wele nygh lorn for Whiche he gan to prey
That god Worde of his peyne haue ſom pyte
And ſende him drynke or elles muſt he dye
And of this aſſes chehe that Was ſo drye
Oute of a Wang tothe ſprang anon a Welle
Of Whiche he dranke ynough ſhortly to ſay
Thus halpe him god as Judicum can tel
  By verry force at gaſa on a nyght
Maugre the philyſtiens of that cyte
The gates of the toun he hath by plight
And on his bache y caried them hath he
High on an hylle Where as men myght them ſe
O noble and myghty ſampſon leef and dere
Hadde thou nat tolde to Women thy ſecre
In alle this Worlde ne hadde be thy pere
  This Sampſon neyther ſydre dranke ne Wyne
Ne on his hede cam raſoure none ne ſhere
By precept of the meſſangere deupne
For al his ſtrengthes in his heris Were
And fully twenty yere by yere
Of iſrael he hadde the gouernaunce
But after ſone Wept he many a tere
For Wymen brought him to myſchaunce
  Unto his lemman dalida he tolde
That in his heris alle his ſtrenght lay
And falſely to his foos him ſhe ſolde

And sleppyng in her barme vpon a day
They made to clyppe or shere his here alwey
And made his fomey alle his craft aspyen
And whan that they him fonde in suche array
They bonde him faste and put oute his eyen
But or his heres were clypped or shaue
There nas no bonde that myght him bynde
But now is he put in pryson in a caue
where as they made him at the querne grynde
O noble Sampson strongest of manhynde
O whilom iuge in glory and in riches
Now mayst thou wepe with thyn eyn blynde
Sithen thou art from wele fallen into wrechydnes
The ende of this caytyf was as I shalle say
His fomen made a feest vpon a day
And made them as their fool bifore them play
And this was in a temple of grete array
But at the last he made a foule fray
For he two postes shoke and made them falle
And doun fylle the temple and there it lay
And slew him selue and eke his fomen alle
This is to say the prynces euerichone
And eke thre thousand bodies were there slayn
With fallyng of the grete temple of stone
Of Sampson wol I nomore sayn
Be ware of this ensample olde and playn
That no man telle their counseyl to their wyues
Of suche thyng as they wolde haue secre fayn
If that it touche their lymmes or their lyues
O Hercules the sonerayne conquerour
Syngyn his werkes laude and his renoun
For in his tyme of strenght he bare the flour
He slough and refte the skynne of the lyoun

And of Centaurus leyd the boſt a doun
He arpies ſlowe the cruelle birdes felle
He the goldeyn apelles raft fro the dragon
He droue oute cerberus the hounde of hel
He ſlough the cruel tyraunt busurus
And made his horſe to frete him fleſſhe and boon
He ſlough the verry ſerpent venemous
Of achilles two hornes brake he that one
And he ſlewe cacus in a caue of ſtone
He ſlew the gyaunt antheus the ſtrong
He ſlough the gryſely bore and that anoon
And bare his hede vpon his neche long
Was neuir wight ſithen the worlde began
That ſlough ſo many monſtres as dyd he
Through the wyde world his name ran
What for his ſtrenght and his bounte
And euery realme went he for to ſee
He was ſo ſtrong that no man myght him lette
And bothe worldes endys ſayth Trophe
In ſtede of boundes he of bras a pylez ſet
A lemman hadde this noble champyon
That hight dyanyra as freſſhe as may
And as clerkes make mencioun
She hath him ſent a ſhert freſſhe and gay
Allas that ſhert allas and wela way
Enuenymed was ſubtelly with alle
That or he hadde werid it half a day
It made his fleſſhe al fro the bones falle
But neuirtheleſſe clerkes hez excuſen
By one that hight neſſus that it maked
Be as be may I wol nat hez accuſen
But on his body the ſhert he werid alle naked
Tyl the fleſſhe was with the venym ſtaked

And whan he ſawe none other remedy
By hoot coles he hath him ſelf rated
For with no venym deyned he to dye
Thus ſtarf this worthy myghty hercules
Lo who may truſte in fortune any throwe
For him that folotheth al this worlde of prees
Or he be ware is oft leyde fulle lowe
Ful wyſe is he that him ſelf can knowe
Beware for whan that fortune lyſt to gloſe
Than wayteth ſhe her man doun to throwe
By ſuche a way as he wolde leſt ſuppoſe
The myghty trone the precious treſoure
The glorious ſceptre and the ryal mageſty
That hadde the kyng Nabugodonoſor
With tongue vnneth may diſcribed be
He twyes wan ieruſalem that cyte
The veſſel of the temple he with him ladde
At Babilon was his ſouerayn ſee
In whiche his glory and his delyte he had
The fayreſt children of the blode ryal
Of ieruſalem he dyd do gelde anoon
And made eche of them to be his thralle
Among alle other daniel was one
That was the wyſeſt childe of al the reaume
For he the dremys of the kyng expouned
Ther as in caldey clerkes were ther none
That wyſt to what fyne his dreme ſowned
This proude kyng leet make a ſtatu of gold
Sixty cubites long and ſeuyn in brede
To whiche ymage bothe yong and olde
Comaunded he to loute and have in drede
Or in a furneys fulle of flames rede
He ſholde be dede that wolde nat obey

But neuer Wolde accorde to that dede
Danyel ne his yong felowes twey
This kyng of kynges proude and elate
He wende god that sytteth in magestye
Ne myght nat bereue of hie estate
But sodenly he lost his dignyte
And lyke a best him semyd for to be
And ete hay as an oxe and lay theroute
In rayn With Wylde bestes walked he
Tyl a certayn tyme Was come aboute
And lyke an egles fethers Were his heris
And naples lyke byrdes clawes Wer
God releuyd him at certayn yeres
And yaue him Wytte and than With many a tere
He thanked god and euer his lyf in fere
Was he to do amys or more trespas
And or that he layd Was on his bere
He knewe that god Was full of myght and grace
Hys sone Whiche that hight Balthasar
That held the regne after his faders day
He by his fader coude nat be Ware
For proude he Was of hert and of aray
And eke an ydolastre Was he ay
His high estate assured him in pryde
But fortune cast him doun and there he lay
And sodenly his regne can deuyde
A feste he made vnto his lordes alle
Vpon a tyme he made them blythe be
And than his officers gan he calle
Goth bryng forth the besselles quod he
Whiche that my fader in his prosperite
Out of the temple of Ierusalem bereft
And to oure goddes thanke We

Of honoure that our elders With vs laft
His wyf his lordes and his concubynes
Ay dronken While theire appetytes laft
Oute of these noble vesselles sondry wynes
And on a Walle this kyng his eyen caft
And saWe an hounde armeles that Wrote faft
For fere of Whiche he quoke and sighed sore
This hound that balthasar made so sore agast
Wrote mane. techel. phares. and no more
In al that londe magicien Was there none
This coude expowne What this lettre ment
But danyel expouned it anoon
And sayd kyng. god to thy fadre sent
Glory and honoure regne tresour and rent
And he Was proude and nothyng god he drad
And therfore grete Wrathe god vpon him sent
And him beraft the reigne that he hadde
He Was oute caft of mannes company
With asses Was his habitacioun
And ete hey as a best in Weet and dry
Tyl that he knewe by grace and by reason
That god of heuyn hath dompnacion
Ouer euery reigne and euery crature
And than hadde god of him compassion
And him restored his reigne and his figure
Ehe thou that art his sone art proude also
And knowest alle these thynges pryuely
And art rebel to god and his foo
Thou dranke ehe of his vesselles boldely
Thy Wyf ehe and thy Wenches synfully
Dranke of the same vesselles sondry wynes
And hezied false goddes cursydly
Therfore to the shapen grete pyne is

This honde was sent fro god that on the walle
Wrote mane techel phares trust me
Thy reigne is done thou weyest nat alle
Deuyded is thy regne and it shalbe
To medes and to percyens quod he
And that same nyght the kyng was slaw
And darius occupied his degree
Though he therto hadde nother right ne lawe
Lordynges here by ensamples may ye take
How that in lordshipe is no sikyrnes
For whan that fortune wol a man forsake
He berith awey his regne and his richesse
And eke his frendes bothe more and les
And what man hath frendes through fortune
Myshappe wol make him enemyes I gesse
This prouerbe is fulle soth and ful comune
Enobia of Palymerie quene
As writeth percyens of her noblenes
So worthy was in armes and so kene
That no wight past her in hardynesse
Ne in lynage ne in none other gentylnes
Of kynges blode of Perce is she discended
I say that she hadde nat moste fayrnesse
But of her shappe she myght nat be amended
From her childehode I fynde that she fled
Office of woman and to wode she went
And many a wylde hertes blode she shedde
With arowes brode that she to them sent
She was so swyft that she anoon them hent
And whan that she was elder she wolde hylle
Lyounes lybertes and beres alle to rent
And in her armes welde them at her wylle
She durst wylde bestes dennys selue

and renne in the mounteyn alle the nyght
And slepe vndre a busshe and she coude ete
wrastyl by very force and very myght
with any yong man were hir neuir so wight
There myght nothyng in hir armes stonde
She kept her maydenhede from euery wight
To no man deyned she to be bonde
But at the last her frendes hath hir maried
To Odnedache a prynce of that countre
Al were it so that she them long taryed
And ye shalle vnderstonde how that he
Hadde suche fantesies as hadde she
But neuirtheless whan they were knytte in fere
They lyued in ioye and in felicite
For eche of them had other leef and dere
Saue one thyng that she wolde neuir assent
By no wey that he sholde by hir lye
But onys for it was pleyn hir entent
To haue a chylde the worlde to multiplye
And also sone as she myght aspye
That she was nat with childe with that dede
Than wolde she suffre him to do his fantesy
Eft sones and nat but onys oute of drede
And if she were with chylde at that cast
Nomore sholde he play that game
Tyl fully fourty daies were y past
Thenne wolde she onys suffre him the same
Alle were this onedache wylde or tame
He gat no more of her for thus she sayde
It was to wyues lychery and shame
In other caas if men with them played
Two sones by this Odnedache had she
The whiche she kept in vertue and letture

But now vnto oure tale turne we
I ſay that ſo worſhipfulle a creature
And wyſe therwith and large with meſure
So penyble in warre and curteyſe ehe
Ne more laboure myght in warre endure
Was noon though alle this worlde men wold ſeke
Her riche array ne myght nat be told
As wele in veſſel as in her clothyng
She was alle cladde in perry and in golde
And ehe left nat for none huntyng
To haue of ſondry tonges folke knowyng
Whan that ſhe leyſer hadde and for to entende
To lerne bokes was alle her lykyng
How ſhe in vertue her lyf myght diſpende
And ſhortly of this ſtory for to trete
So doughty was her huſbonde as ſhe
That they conquered many realmes grete
In the orient with many a fayre cyte
Appertenaunt vnto the maieſte
Of Rome. and with ſtrengith helde them faſte
Ne neuir myght her fomen do her fle
Al the while that Donedahys daies laſt
Her batayles who ſo lyſt them for to rede
Agayn Xapor the kyng and othez mo
And how alle this proceſſe fyl in dede
Why ſhe conquerȳd and what tytle ſhe had therto
And after of her myſchif and of her wo
How that ſhe was beſetyd and y take
Let him to my mayſter petrarche goo
That writeth ynough of this I vndertake
Whan Donedache was dede ſhe myghtely
The realmes helde and with her owne honde
Ayenſt her foos ſhe fought truly

That ther nas prynce ne kyng in alle that londe
But were glade if they that grace fonde
That she ne sholde vpon his londe warrey
With her they made allyaunce by bonde
To be in peas and let them ryde and pley
The emperouze of Rome Claudius
Ne him bifozn the Romayn Galiene
Ne durst neuir be so cozageous
Ne noon ermyn ne none egipcien
Ne surzyen ne none arzabien
Within the felde that durst with her fight
Left that she wolde them with her handes slayn
Oz with her meney put them to flight
In kynges habite went her sones two
As heires of her realmaes alle
And hermanno and titamallo
Theire names were as perciens them calle
But ay fortune hath in her hony galle
This myghty quene may no while endure
Fortune oute of reigne made her to falle
To wzechydnesse and to myfauentuze
Aurilian whan that the gouernaunce
Of Rome cam in his hondes twey
He shope vpon this quene to do vengeaunce
And with his legyons he toke his wey
Toward Cenobie and shortly for to say
He made her fle and at the last her hent
And fetryd her and ehe her children twey
And wan the londe and home to Rome he went
Among othez thynges that he wan
Her chare that of golde was wrought and perre
This grete Romayn this Aurilyan
Hath with him lad that formen sholde se

Biforn his tryumphe walkyd she
With goldeyn cheynes on her hangyng
Crouned she was as a quene of degre
And ful of perry charboucle clothyng
Allas fortune she that whilom was
Dredefulle to kynges and to Emperoures
Now gaureth alle the people on her allas
And she that helmyd was in starke stoures
And wan by force townes strong and toures
Shal on her hede now were autre myte
And she that bare the sceptre fulle of floures
Shal bere a dystaf her cost for to quyte
O Sir Mylane grete barnabo biscount
God of delyte and scourge of Lumbardy
Why sholde nat ȝ thy fortune acounte
Sithen in estate thou clombeyn were so hye
Thy brother sone that was thy double alye
For he thy neveu we was and son in lawe
Within his prison made the to dye
But why ne holde not ȝ that thou were slawe
O Sir the erle hugelyn of pyse the langoure
There may no tongue telle for pyte
But lytel oute of pyse stondeth a toure
In whiche toure in prison put was he
And with him his lytel childreyn thre
The eldest scarsly fyue yere was of age
Allas fortune it was grete cruelte
Suche byrdes to put in suche a cage
Dampned he was to dye in that prison
For Rogier whiche bisshop was of pyse
Hadde on him made a false subgestion
Through whiche the people gan on him arise
And put him in prison in suche wyse

As ye haue herd and mete and drynke he hadde
So ſmal that wele vnneth it may ſuffiſe
And therwith al it was fulle poure and badde
And on a day it befylle that in that oure
Whan that his mete was wont to be brought
The gayler ſhytte the dores of the toure
He herd it wele but he ſpake right nought
And in his hert anoon ther fylle a thought
That they for hungre wolde do him to dyen
Allas quod he allas that I was wrought
Therwith the teris fyl from his eyen
His yong ſone that thre yere was of age
Vnto his fadre he ſayd why do ye wepe
Whan wol oure gayler bryng oure potage
Is ther no morſel brede that ye do kepe
I am ſo hungry that I may nat ſlepe
Now wolde to god that I myght ſlepe euir
Than ſholde no hungre in my ſoule crepe
Ther is no thyng than brede that me were lyuer
Thus day by day this childe gan to crye
Tyl in his faders barme a doun it lay
And ſayd fare wele fader I muſt dye
And kyſſed his fader and dyed the ſame day
And whan the wofull fader dede him ſay
For wo his armes he gan to byte
And ſayd allas fortune and wela wey
Thy fals whele my woo alle may wyte
This other childe wende that for hungre it was
That he his armes knewe and nat for wo
And ſayd fader do nat ſo allas
But rather ete the fleſſhe vpon vs two
Oure fleſſhe thou yaue vs take oure fleſſhe vs fro
And ete ynough right thus the childe ſayde

And after that within a day or two
They leyde them doun in his lappe and deyd
Him self despeyred eke for hunger starf
Thus endyd the myghty erle of pyse
From high estate fortune away him carf
Of this tragedy it ought ynough suffise
Who so wol here it in a lenger wyse
Redith the grete poete of ytayl
That highte daunte for he can it deuyse
Fro poynte to poynte nat one worde wol he fayl
Al though that Nero were as vicious
As any feend that lyeth full low adoun
yet he as telleth vs swetonyus
Al this worlde hadde in subiectioun
Bothe est and west and septentryon
Of rubies saphires and of perles white
Were alle his clothes browded by and doun
For he in gemmys gretly gan delyte
More delicate more pompeous of array
More proude was neuir emperour than he
That ilke cloth that he hadde werid one day
After that tyme he nolde it neuir se
Nettes of golde threde hadde he grete plente
To fysshe in tybir whan him lyst to pley
His lustes were as lawe in his degre
For fortune as his frende wolde him obey
He Rome brent for his delycacy
The senatoures he slough vpon a day
To here how that tho men wolde wepe and crye
And slough his brother and by his sustre lay
His modre made he in a pytous array
For he her wombe leet slytte to beholde
Where he conceyued was so wela wey

That he ſo lytel of his modre tolde
No teris oute of his eyen for that ſight
Ne cam. But ſayd a fayre Woman was ſhe
Grete Wondre is that he coude or myght
Be domeſman of her dede Beaute
The Wyne to bryng him comaunded he
And dranke anoon none other Wo he made
Whan myght is ioyned vnto cruelte
Alas to depe Wol the benym Wade
In youthe a mayſter had this emperoure
To teche him lettrure and curteſy
For of moralite he Was the floure
As in his tyme but if his Bokes lye
And Whiles his mayſter hadde of him mayſtre
He made him ſo conning and ſo ſouple
That long tyme it Was or tyrannye
Or any vyce durſt in him vncouple
Seneca his mayſter Was of Whiche I deuyſe
Bicauſe Nero hadde of him ſuche drede
For he for his vyces Wolde him chaſtice
Diſcretly as by Worde and nat by dede
Sir he Wolde ſay an emperour moot nede
Be vertuous and hate tyranny
For Whiche he made him a bathe to blede
In bothes his armes tyl he muſt dye
This nero hadde eke of accuſtumaunce
In youthe ayenſt his mayſter to ryſe
Whiche afterWard him thoughte a grete greuaunce
Bicauſe he oft Wolde him chaſtice
Therfore he made him dye in this Wyſe
To cheſe in a bathe to dye in this manere
Rather than to haue a nother turmentyſe
And thus hath Nero ſlayn his mayſter dere

Now fyl it ſo that fortune lyſt no lengꝛ
The high pryde of nero to cherylſhe
For thoughe he ware ſtrong yet was ſhe ſtrengꝛ
She thought thus by god y am to nyce
To ſette a man that is fulfylled of vyce
In high degre amd am emperoure him calle
By god oute of his ſete y wol him tryce
Whan he leſt wenyth ſoneſt ſhal he falle
The people roos vpon him on a nyght
For his defaute and whan he it aſpyed
Oute of his dores anon he hath him dight
Alone and there he wende to be allyed
He knocked faſte and ay the moꝛe he cryde
The faſtyꝛ ſhytte they the doꝛes alle
Tho wyſt he wele he hadde him ſelf bewryed
And went his wey no lengꝛ durſt he calle
The people cryde and rombled vp and doun
That with his eris he herd how that they ſayd
Where is this falſe tyraunt this neron
For fere ful nere oute of his wytte he brayde
And to his goddes pytouſly he prayde
For ſocoure but it myght nat betyde
For drede of this him thought that he deyd
And ran into a gardeyn him to hyde
And in this gardeyn fonde he chorles twey
And ſyttyng by a fyre grete and rede
And to the chorles twey he gan to pray
To ſle him and to gyrde of his hede
That to his body whan he were dede
Were no deſpyte doon for his defame
Him ſelf he ſloth he coude no bettre rede
Of whiche fortune lough and hadde game

Was neuir capdeyn vndre a kyng
That regnes mo put in subiectioun
Ne strengez was in feld of al thyng
as in his tyme ne gretez of renony
Ne moze pompeous in high presumpcioun
Than olopherne Whiche foztune ay kyst
Solicozous ladde him vp and doun
Tyl that he dede was oz that he wyst
Nat only that this woxlde hadde of him awe
foz lesyng of richesse and lyberty
But he made euery man renye his lawe
Nabugodonosoz was lozd sayd he
None othez lozd shal honoured be
ayenst his heste ther daz no wight trespas
Saue in bethulia a strong cyte
Where Eliachim was preest of that place
But take hepe of the deth of olopherne
Amyd his hooste he dronke lay al nyght
Within his tente large as is a berne
And yet foz alle his pompe and alle his myght
Judith a Woman as he lay vp right
Slepyng his hede of smote and fro his tent
ful pryuely she stale from euery Wight
And With his hede vnto hez toun she Went
What nedith it of kyng Antiochus
To telle his high and ryalle magestye
His high pryde his Werke venemous
foz suche a nothez man nas neuir as he
Redith What that he Was in machabe
And redith the proude Werkes that he sayd
And Why he fyl from his prosperite
And in any hylle how Wrecchidly he deyd
foztune him hadde enhaunced so in pryde

That verily he wende he myght attayne
Vnto the sterres vpon euery syde
And in a balaunce to wey eche mountayn
And alle the flodes of the see restreyne
And goddes people hadde he moost in hate
Them wolde he sle in turment and in peyne
Wenyng that god ne myght his pryde abate
And for that Nichamor and Tymothe
Whiche ie wes were enquysshed myghtely
Vnto the ie wes suche an hate had he
That he had grathed his chare fulle hastely
And swore and sayde ful despytously
Vnto ierusalem he wolde eftsone
To wreke his yre on it ful cruelly
But of his purpos was he let fulle sone
God for his manace him sore smote
With inuysible wounde ay incurable
That in his guttes carf so and bote
That his peynes were importable
And certaynly the wreche was resonable
For many a mannys guttes dyd he peyne
But from his purpos cursed and dampnable
For alle his smert he nolde him restreyne
But badde anoon pareylen his hoost
And sodenly or he thay was ware
God daunted alle his pryde and alle his boost
For he so sore fyl oute of his chare
That alle his lymmes and his flesshe to tare
So that he ne myght go ne ryde
But in a chare men aboute him bare
Al for broised bothe bake and syde
The wreche of god him smote so cruelly
That in his body wycked wormes crept

And therwithal he stanke so horribly
That none of alle his meny that him kept
Whether that he Woke or elles slept
Ne myght nat of him the stynke endure
And in this myschief he Wayled and he Wept
And kneWe god lord of euery creature
To al his hoost and to him self also
Ful Wattsom Was the stynke of his careyn
No man myght him bere to ne fro
And in his stynke and in his horrible peyn
He starf ful Wrechydly on a mountayn
Thus hath this robber and this homycide
That many a man made to Wepe and playn
Suche guerdon as belongith vnto pryde
The story of Alisaundre is so comune
That euery Wight that hath discrecioun
Hath herd somWhat or alle of his fortune
This Wyde Worlde as in conclusioun
He Wan by strenght and by his renoun
They Were glade for peas vnto him sende
The pryde of man and Bost he leyd adoun
Where so he cam vnto the Worldes ende
Comparison myght yet neuer be maked
Bitwixte him and an other conquerour
For alle this Worlde for drede of him quaked
He Was of knyghthode and of fredom floure
Fortune him made the heire of high honoure
Saue Wyne and Wemen nothyng myght aswage
His high entent in armes and laboure
So Was he ful of louyng corage
What pryde Were it to him though I you tolde
Of darius and of an hundred thousand mo
Of prynces erles and kynges bolde

Whiche he conquered and brought to Wo
I ſay as fer as a man may ryde or go
The Worlde Was his What ſhuld I more deuyſe
For thought I Wrote and tolde you euirmo
Of his knyghthode, it myght nat ſuffiſe
Eu pere he regned as I rede in Machabe
Philippes ſone of macedone he Was
That firſt Was kyng of grece that countre
O wórthy gentyl Antiſaunder allas
That euir ſhuld the falle ſuche a caas
Enpoyſoned of thy folke thou Were
Thy fyce fortune hath turned into ay aas
And yet for the ne Wept ſhe neuir a tere
Who ſhal yeue myn teris to compleyne
The deth of gentylles and of Fraunchiſe
That alle the Worlde Welded in his demeyne
And yet him thought it myght nat ſuffiſe
So ful Was his corage of high empryſe
Allas Who ſhal me helpe to endite
Fals fortune and poyſon to diſpyſe
The Whiche of alle this Wo I Wyte
By Wyſdome manhode and grete laboure
From humble bedde to ryalle mageſty
Up roos he Julius the conquerour
That alle the occident by londe and ſee
By ſtrenght of hond or elles by tretye
And vnto Rome made them tributary
And ſithen of Rome emperour Was he
Tyl that fortune Weyt his aduerſary
O myghty ceſar that in Theſſaly
Ayenſt pompeyus fader thyn in laWe
That of the orient hadde the cheualry
As fer as that the day begynneth to dawe

Them throughe knyghthode hast take and slawe
Haue fewe folke that with pompeius fledde
Throughe whiche thou puttest al the orient in awe
Thanke fortune that so wele the spedde
But now a lytel while I wol bewayle
This pompeius this noble gouernoure
Of Rome whiche that fledde at this bataylle
I say one of his men a false traytoure
His hede of smote to wynne him fauoure
Of Julius. and to him thedre brought
Alias pompey of the orient conquerour
That fortune vnto suche a fyne the brought
To Rome agayn repayrith Julius
With his tryumphe laureat ful hye
But on a tyme brutus cassius
That enuie hadde of his high estate enuye
Fulle pryuely had made conspiracy
Ayenst this Julius in subtil wyse
And cast the place in whiche he shuld dy
With boydekyns as I shal you deuyse
This Julius vnto the capitoly went
Upon a day as he was wont to goon
And in the capitoly anoon him hent
This false brutus and his othre foon
And styked him with boydekynnes anoon
With many a wound and thus they leet him lye
But neuir gruntyd he at no stroke but one
Or elles at two but if his story lye
So manly was this Julius of herte
And so wele loued estatly honestly
That though his dedly woundes so sore smert
His mantel ouir his hippes cast he
For no man sholde se his preuyte

As he lay in dyvng on a traunce
And wyst verily that dye sholde he
Of honesty yet hadde he remembraunce
To Lucan to the this story I recomende
And to Sweton and to Valery also
That of this story writen worde and ende
How that these conquerours two
Fortune was first a frende and sithen a fo
No man truste upon hir fauour longe
But have hir in a wayte for euirmoo
Wytnes on al the conquerours stronge
O Noble o worthy petro glory of spayne
Whom fortune helde so high in magesty
Wele ought men thy pytous deth compleyne
Out of thy londe thy brother made the fle
And after at a siege by subtelty
Thou were betrayed and ladde by to his tent
Where as he with his owne honde slough the
Succedyng in thy regne and in thy rent
The felde of snowe with the egle of blacke therin
Caught with the lyme rode coloured as a glede
He brewe this cursydnes and al this synne
The wyked nest was werker of this nede
Nat charles olyuer that tok ay hede
Of trouthe and honoure But of armorike
Genelon olyuer corrupt for mede
Brought this worthy kyng in suche a brike
O worthy petro kyng of cypre also
That Alisaundre way by high maystrye
Ful many an hethen wroughtest thou ful wo
Of whiche thyn owne lieges hadde enuye
And for no thyng but for thy chevalry
They in thy bedde haue slayn the by the morowe

Thus can fortune wele gouerne and gye
And oute of ioye bryng men to sorowe
t He riche cresus whilom kyng of lyde
Of whiche cresus cyrus sore him dradde
yet was he caught amyd alle his pryde
And to brenne men to the fyre him laddе
But suche a rayn doun fro the firmament shadde
That queynte the fyre and made him to scape
But to be waxe yet no grace he hadde
Tyl fortune on the galowes made him gape
Whan he escaped was he coude nat stynt
Forto begynne a newe array agayn
He wende wele for that fortune him sent
Suche happe that he escaped through the rayne
That of his foos he myght nat be slayn
And eke a sweuyn vpon a nyght he mette
Of whiche he was so proude and so fayn
That in vengeaunce he atte his herte set
Vpon a tre he was as him thoughte
There Jupiter him wesshe bothe backe and syde
And phebus eke a fayre towel him brought
To dry him with and therwith weyt his pryde
And to his doughter that stode him besyde
Whiche that he knewe in high sentence habounded
He badde her telle what it signyfied
And she his dremys right thus expowned
The tre quod she the galowes is to mene
And iupiter betokeneth snowe and rayne
And phebus with his towel so clene
Betokneth the sonne bemys soth to sayn
Thou shalt an hanged be fader certayn
Rayn shal the wasshe and sonne shal the drye
Thus she warnyd him ful plat and ful playn
His doughter that called was phanye

Anhangyd Was cresus the proude kyng
His ryalle trone myght him nat auayle
Tragedy is noon other maner thyng
Ne can in syngyng cryng ne bewayle
But for that fortune alday wyl assayle
With vn ware strok the regnes that be proude
For whan men trust in her than wol she fayle
And couir her bright face vndre a cloude

Here endith the tale of the monke
And begynneth the prologue
Of the Nonnes preest

H Do quod the knyght gode sir no more of this
That ye haue sayd is right ynough ywys
And mekyl more for lytel hem ys
Is right ynough to mekyl folke I gesse
I say for me it is a grete disease
Where as men haue be in welthe and ease
To here of their sodeyn falle allas
And the contrarye is ioye and solas
As whan a man hath be in poure estate
And clymbeth vp and weyeth fortunate
And there abideth in prosperite
Suche thyng is gladsom as thynketh me
And of suche thyng were gode for to telle
ye quod oure hoost by seint poules belle
ye say right soth this monke clappith loude
He spake how fortune couered with a cloude
I wot neuir what. and als of a tragedy
Right now ye herd and parde no remedy
It is for to bewayle ne compleyne
That. that is doon. and eke it is a peyne

As ye haue ſeyd to here of heuynes
Sir monke no more of this ſo god you bleſſe
youre tale anoyeth alle this comoanye
Suche talkyng is nat worth a butterflye
for therin is no diſporte ne game
wherfore ſir monke or dan piers by your name
I pray you hartely telle vs ſom what elles
for ſikerly nerclynkyng of your belles
That on your brydel hange on euery ſyde
By heuyn kyng that for vs alle deyde
I ſholde or this haue fallen doun for ſlepe
alle though the ſcough hadde neuir be ſo depe
Than hadde your tale alle be tolde in veyn
for certaynly as that theſe clerkes ſayn
where as a man may haue none audience
Nat helpith it to telle his ſentence
and were I wote the ſubſtaunce is in me
If any thyng ſhalle wele reported be
Sir ſay ſom what of huntyng I you pray
Nay quod this monke I haue no lyſt to play
Now let a nother telle as I haue tolde
Than ſpake oure hooſt with rude ſpeche and bolde
And ſayd to the nonnes preeſt anoon
Come nere thou preeſt come hyder thou ſir John
Tel vs ſuche thyng as may our hertes glade
Be blythe though thou ryde vpon a iade
What though thy horſe be foule and lene
If he wol ſerue the reche the nat a bene
Loke that thy hert be mery euirmo
yes ſir quod he yes hooſt ſo moot I go
But I be mery y wys I wol be blamed
And right anoon his tale he hath attamyd
And thus he ſayd vnto vs euerichone

This ſwete preeſt this godely man ſir Iohn

Here endith the prologue of the nonnes preeſt
And begynneth his tale



A poure wydowe ſomdele y ſtept in age
Was ſomtyme duellyng in a cotage
Beſyde a groue ſtondyng in a dale
This wydowe of whiche I telle you my tale
Sithen that day that ſhe was laſt a wyf
In pacience ledde a ful ſymple lyf
For lytel was her catel and her rent
By huſbondry of ſuche as god her ſent
She fonde her ſelf and eke her doughtren two
Thre large ſowes hadde ſhe and no moo
Thre kyne and eke a ſhepe that hight malle
Wele ſoty was her boure and eke her halle
In whiche ſhe ete many a ſlender mele

Of poynaunt ſawce ne hnewe ſhe neuir a deel
Ne deynte morcel paſſed through hez throte
Hez dyet was accordaunt to hez cote
Repleccioun ne made hez neutz ſeke
A temperat dyet was hez phiſyk
And exercyſe and hertis ſuffiſaunce
The gowte leet hez nothyng foz to daunce
Ne apoplexie ſhent nat hez hede
No wyne ne dranke ſhe neythez white ne rede
Hez lozd was mooſt ſeruyd with white and blak
Mylke and broun brede in whiche ſhe fonde no lak
Seynd bacon and ſomtym an egg oz tweye
And ſhe was as it wer a manez deye
A yerd ſhe hadde enclоſed alle aboute
With ſtyches and dry dyched without
In whiche ſhe hadde a cocke hight chaunteclere
In alle the lond of crowyng nas his pere
His voyce was meriaz than the mery orgon
On maſſe dayes that in the chirches goon
Wele ſpherez was his crowyng in his logge
Than is a clocke oz in any abbey an orloge
By nature he crewe eche aſſencion
Of the equynoccion in the toun
Foz whan degrees fyftene were aſcendyd
Than crewe he that it myght nat be amended
His come was redez than the fyne coralle
And battelyd as it hadde be a caſtel walle
His byl was blake as any gete it ſhone
Lyke aſure were his legges and his toon
His nayles whyttez than the lily floure
And lyke the burnyd golde was his coloure
This gentyl cok had in his gouernaunce
Seuyn hennys to do alle his pleſaunce

Whiche were his susters and his paramoures
And wondre lyke to him as of colloures
Of whiche the fayrest herwed in the throte
Was cleped fayre dampsel parlote
He fethred her an hundred tyme a day
And she him plesith alle that euir she may
Curteys she was discrete and debonayre
And compenable and her self so fayre
Sithen the tyme that she was seuyn nyght old
That truly she hath the hert in holde
Of chaunteclers lokyng in euery lith
He loued her so that wele was him therwith
But suche a ioye it was to here them syng
Whan the bright sone gan to spryng
In swete accorde my leef is fer in lond
For that tyme as I haue understonde
Bestys and byrdes coude spekе and syng
And it so fyl that in the dawnyng
As chaunteclere among his wyues alle
Sat on his perche that was in the halle
And neyte him sat his fayre partlote
This chaunceclere gan to grone in his throte
As a man in his dreme is dretchyd sore
And whan that partlote thus herde him rore
She was agast and sayd hert dere
What ayleth you to grone in this manere
ye be a bery sleper fy for shame
And he aunswerd thus and sayd madame
I pray you that ye take it nat in greef
By god I mette I was in suche myscheif
Right now that yet myn hert is sore a fryght
Now god quod he my sweuyn retche a right
And kepe my body oute of foule pryson

Me mette that I roumed vp and doun
Within oure yerde Where I saw a best
Was lyke an hounde and Wolde haue made a rest
Vpon my body and Wolde haue hadde me dede
His coloure Was betWixte yelowe and rede
And typpyd Was his tayle and bothe his eris
With blacke vnlyke the remenaunt of his heris
His snowte smalle With glowyng eyen tWey
yet for his lowe almost for fere I dey
This causith me my gronyng doutles
Auoy quod she fy for shame hertles
Allas quod she for by god aboue
Now haue ye lost myn hert and al my loue
I can nat loue a cowerd by my feyth
For certis What so any woman sayth
We alle desire if it myght be
To haue husbondes hardy Wyse and fre
And secre te and none negarde ne no fool
Ne him that is agast of euery tool
Ne none auauntour by that god aboue
How durst ye say for shame vnto youre loue
That any thyng myght make thou aferde
Haue ye no mannes hert and haue a berde
Allas and can ye be aferde of swevynnes
No thyng but vanyte god Wote in swevyn is
Swevynnes been engendred of repleccions
And of fume and of complexions
Whan humoures been to habundaunt in a Wight
Certis this dreme Which ye haue mette to nyght
I telle you trouthe ye may trust me
Cometh of superfluyte and rede coler parde
Which cause folke to drede in theire dremys
Of arowes and of fyre With rede lemys

Of rede bestys that wol them byte
Of contyke and of waspes grete and lyte
Right as the humoure of melancoly
Causeth many a man in slepe to cry
For fere of grete boles and beres blake
Or elles blake deuylles wol them take
Of other humoures coude I telle also
That worke a man in slepe mekyl wo
But I wol passe as lyghtly as I can
Lo caton which that was so wyse a man
Sayde he nat thus do no force of dremys
Now sir quod she whan we fle fro the bemys
For goddes loue as taketh som laxatyf
Upon peryl of my soule and of my lyf
I counceil you the best I wol nat lye
That bothe of colere and of melancoly
Ye purge you and for ye shal nat tary
Though in this toun be none appotecary
I shal my self two herbes teche you
That shal be for youre hele and for youre prow
And in oure yerde tho herbes shal I fynde
The whiche haue of their properte by kynde
To purge you beneth and eke aboue
Forget nat this for goddes owne loue
Ye be right colorych of complexioun
Where the sonne is in his ascencioun
Ne fynde you nat replete of humoures hote
For if ye do I dar wele lay a grote
That ye shal haue a feuer tercian
Or elles an ague wel that may be youre bane
A day or two ye shalle haue digestyues
Of wormes or ye take youre laxatiuys
Of laureal centorye and of fumetere

Or elles of the elderberies that growyn there
Of catapuce or of gaytres beryes
Of herbe Iue growyng in oure yerde that mery is
Pluche them vp as they growe and ete them in
Be mery husbonde for your fader kyn
Dredith no dreme I can say you no more
Madame quod he gramercy of your lore
But natheles as touchyng dan catoun
That of wysdome hath suche a grete renoun
Though he badde no dremes for to drede
By god men may in olde bokes rede
Of many a man more of auctorite
Than euir dan caton was so moot I the
That alle the reuers sayth of his sentence
And haue wele founde by experience
That dremys be significaciouns
As wele of ioye as of tribulaciouns
That folke endure in this lyf present
Ther nedith to make of this none argument
The very preef liggith with it in dede
One of the gretest auctours that men rede
Sayth thus that somtyme two felowes went
On pylgramage in ful gode entent
And happned so they cam in a toun
Where as ther was suche congregacioun
Of people and eke of strayt herbigage
That they ne fonde as mekyl as a cotage
In whiche they bothe myght y logyd be
Wherfore they must of necessite
As for that nyght departe company
And eche of them goth to his hostrye
And take his logyng as it wolde falle
That one of them was logyd in a stalle

Ferre in the yerde With oxen of the plow
That other man Was logyd Wele ynow
As Was his auenture or his fortune
That bs gouerneth alle as in comune
And so it befyl long or it Were day
This man mette in his bedde there he lay
How that his felowe gan vpon him calle
And sayd allas for in an oxes stalle
This nyght shal I be murdred there I ly
Now helpe me dere brother or I dye
In alle the haste come to me he sayd
This man oute his slepe for fere abrayde
And Whan he Was Walked of his slepe
He turned him and toke of this no kepe
Him thought his dreme Was but a Vanyte
Thus twyse in his slepe dremyd he
And at the thridde tyme yet his felawe
Cam as him thought and sayde I am now slaw
Beholde my blody Woundes depe and Wyde
Aryse vp arely in the morowe tyde
And at the West gate of the toun quod he
A carte ful of dung there shalt thou se
In Whiche my body is hydde full preuely
Do that cart arest boldely
My gold caused my deth soth to sayn
And tolde him euery poynt how he Was slayn
With a full pytous face pale of he We
And trust Wele his dreme he fonde right tre We
For on the morowe as sone as it Was day
To his felowes ynne he toke the Wey
And Whan that he cam to the oxes stalle
After his felow he gan to calle
The hosteller aunswerd him anon

And ſayd ſir youre felow is goon
As ſone as day he went out of the toun
This man gan fal in ſuſpecion
Remembrynge of his dremys that he mette
And forth he goth no lenger wolde he let
Vnto the weſt gate of the toun and fonde
A dong carte as it were to dong londe
That was arrayed in the ſame wyſe
As ye haue herde the dede man deuyſe
And with hardy hert he gan to crye
Vengeaunce and iuſtice of this felony
My felowe murdred is this ſame nyght
And in this carte he lyeth gappyng vp right
I crye oute on the myniſtres quod he
That ſholde kepe and rule this cyte
Harow allas here lyeth my felowe ſlayn
What ſholde I more of this tale ſayn
The peple oute ſtert and caſt the carte to grounde
And in the myddel of the donge they fonde
The dede man thay murdred was al newe
O bliſful god that art ſo gode and trewe
Lo how that thou bewrayeſt murdre alwey
Murdre wol oute that ſe we day by day
Murdre is ſo wlatſom and abhominable
To god that ſo iuſte is and reſonable
That he ne wol it ſuffre helyd to be
Though it abyde a yere or two or thre
Murdre wol oute this is my concluſioun
And right anon the myniſters of the toun
Haue hent the carter and ſo ſore him pyned
And eke the hoſteller ſo ſore engyned
That they beknewe theire wyckednes anoon
And were an hangyd by the necke boon

Here may ye se that dremys be to drede
And certis in the same lyf I rede
Right in the neyte chaptre after this
I gabbe nat so haue I ioye and blys
t Wo men that Wolde haue passed ouir the see
For certayn causes in a fer countre
If the wynde ne hadde be contrarye
That made them in a cyte to tarye
That stode ful mery vpon an hauyn syde
But on a day ayenst an euyn tyde
The wynde gan chaunge and blewe as him lest
Joly and glade they Wenten to rest
And cast them ful erely for to sayle
But herbyn to one may fylle a grete meruayle
That one of them in slepyng as he lay
He mette a wondre dreme agan the day
Him thought a man stode by his beddes syde
And him comaunded that he sholde abyde
And sayd him thus if thou to morowe wende
Thou shalt be drent my tale is at an ende
He woke and tolde his felawe what he mette
And prayde him his viage for tolette
As for that day he prayde him for to abyde
His felawe that lay by his beddes syde
Gan for to laughe and scorned him fulle faste
No dreme quod he may so my hert agast
That I wol let for to do my thynges
I set nat a strawe for thy dremynges
For sweuennes be but Wanytees and iapes
Men mete alday of oules and of apes
And eke of many a mase therwith alle
And dreme of thyng that neuir was ne shalle
But sithen I se that thou wol here abyde

And thus ſlouthen wylfully the tyde
God wote it rewith me fulle ſore and haue gode day
And thus he toke his leue and went his way
But or he hadde half his courſe y ſayled
Nat why ne what myſchaunce it ayled
But caſually the ſhippes botom to rent
And ſhip and man vndre the water went
In ſight of other ſhippes beſyde
That with him ſayled at the ſame tyde
And therfore fayre partelot ſo dere
By ſuche enſamples olde mayſt thou here
That no man ſholde be to recheleſſe
Of dremys for I ſay the doutles
That many a dreme ful ſore is for to drede
Lo in the lyf of ſeint kenelme I rede
That was kenulphus ſone the noble kyng
Of merciryk how kenelme met a thyng
A lytel or he were murdred on a day
His murdre in his viſioun he ſay
His norice him expouned it euery dele
His ſweuyn and bad him kepe him wele
Fro treſon but he was but ſeuyn yere olde
And therfore lytel tale he hath therof tolde
Of any dreme ſo holy was his herte
By god I hadde leuyr than my ſherte
That ye had herde his legende as haue I
Dame partlot I ſay to you truly
Macrobius that writeth the a viſioun
In affryke of the worthy ſcypioun
Affermyth dremys and ſayth that they been
Warnyng of the thynges that we after ſeen
And ferthermore I pray you lokith wele
In the olde teſtament of daniel

If he held dremys any banyte
Rede ehe of Joseph and there shal ye se
Wondres been somtyme but I say nat alle
Warnyng of thynges that shal after falle
Lo of egypt the kyng that hight pharo
His baker and his botteller also
Whether they felt none effect in dremys
Who so wol sehe actes of sondry reamys
May rede of dremes a wondre thyng
Lo cresus whiche was of Lyde kyng
Mette he nat that he sat vpon a tre
Whiche signified he sholde hanged be
Lo Andrometa Hectoures wyf
That day that Hectour sholde lese his lyf
She dremyd in the same nyght bifore
How that the lyf of Hectoure sholde be lore
If that day he went vnto batayle
She warnyd him but it myght nat auayle
He went for to fight natheles
But he was slayn anoon of achilles
But that tale is to long to telle
And ehe it is nygh day I may nat duelle
Shortly I say as for conclusioun
That I shalle haue of this auysioun
Aduersite and I say furthermore
That I ne telle of laxatyues no store
For they be venemous I wote it wel
I them diffy I loue them neuir a deel
But now let vs speke of myrthe and stynt al this
Madame partlote so haue I blys
Of one thyng god hath me sentlargye grace
For whan I se the beaute of youre face
ye be so scarlet rede aboute youre eyen

Jt makith al my drede for to dyen
For also syker as in principio
Mulier est hominis confusio
Madame the sentence of this latyn is
Woman is mannes ioye and his blysse
For when J fele on nyght your soft syde
Al be it that J may nat on you ryde
For that oure perche is made so narow allas
J am so ful of ioy and of solas
That J dissy bothe sweuene and dreme
And with that worde he fyl doun fro the beme
For it was day and eke his hennes alle
And with a chuk he gan them for to calle
For he hadde founde a corne lay in the yerde
Royalle he was and he no man aferde
He fedred partelote twenty tyme
And trade her eke as ofte or it was pryme
He loketh as he were a grymlyoun
And on his toos he rometh vp and doun
Him deyned nat to set his feet to grounde
And chucked whan he hadde a corne y founde
And to him ran his wyues alle
As royalle as a prynce in his halle
Leue J this chaunteclere in his pasture
And after wol J telle of his auenture
Whan the moneth in the whiche the worlde began
That hight Marche that god first made man
Was complete and passyd were also
Sithen Marche began twenty daies and two
Befyl that chaunteclere in alle his pryde
His seuyn hennes walkyng him beside
Cast vp his eyen to the bright sonne
That in the signe of taurus was y ronne

Fourty degrees and one and somwhat more
Ye knewe by kynde and by noon other lore
That it was pryme and crewe with a blisful steuyn
The sonne he sayde is clombe vp to heuyn
Fourty degrees and one and somwhat more ywys
Madame partlote my worldes blys
Herkyn how this blisful byrdes syng
And se the fresshe floures how they sprynge
Ful is myn herte of reuel and solas
But sodenly him fyl a sorowful caas
For euir the lattre ende of ioye is woo
God wot that worldly ioye is sone ago
And if a rethoure coude fayre endite
He in a cronycle myght sauely wryte
As for a souerayn notabilite
Now euery wiseman herkyn to me
This storye is also trewe I vndertake
As is the boke of Launcelot de lake
That women holde in ful grete reuerence
Now wol I turne ayen to my sentence
A col fox ful of sleight and iniquyte
That in the groue hadde woned yeres thre
By high ymaginacion aforn cast
The same nyght throughe the hegge braste
Into the yerde there chaunteclere the fayre
Was wont and eke his wyues to repayre
And in a bedde of wortes stylle he lay
Til it was past vndren of the day
Waytyng his tyme on chaunteclere to falle
As gladly doon these homycides alle
That in a wayte lygge to murdre men
O false murdrer ruchyng in the den
O newe scariot and newe genelon

ſalſe diſſimploure o grete Synon
That broughteſt troye vtterly to ſorowe
O clauncteclere acurſed be the morow
That thou in the yerde fley fro the bemys
Thou were ful wele warnyd by thy dremys
That ilke day was perilous to the
But what that god afore wote muſt nedes be
After the opunyon of certayn clerkes
Wytnes of him that any clerke is
That in ſcole is grete alteracioun
In this matez and grete diſputacioun
And hath been of an hundred thouſand men
But I ne can nat bulte it to the brenne
As can the holy doctoure auguſtyn
Or boece or the biſſhop bradwardyn
Whethyr that goddes worthy fore wetyng
Streyneth me nedely to do a thyng
Nedely clepe I ſymple neceſſite
Or if the fre choos be graunted me
To do that ſame thyng or do it nought
Though god fore wote it or it was wrought
Or if his wyttyng streyneth neuir a dele
But by neceſſite condicioneel
I wol nat haue doon in ſuche matere
My tale is of a cok as ye ſhal here
That toke his counſeyl of his wyf with ſorowe
To walke in the yerde vpon the morowe
That he hadde met his dreme as I you tolde
Womens counceiles been ful oft colde
Wymens counceyl brought vs firſt to wo
And made adam from paradiſe to go
There as he was ful mery and wele at eaſe
But for I not whom I myght diſpleaſe

If I counceyl of Women wolde blame
Passe ouir for I sayde it in my game
Redith auctours where they trete of suche matere
And what they say of Women ye may here
These been these cokes wordes and nat myn
I can no harme of no woman deuyne
Faire in the sonde to bathe her merily
Lyeth partelot and al her susters by
Agenst the sonne and chaunteclere so fre
Sang meriar than the mermayde in the see
For philosophus sayth ytterly
How that they songe wele and merely
And so befyl as he cast his eye
Among the wortes on a butterflye
He was ware of this fox that lay ful lowe
No thyng than lust him to crowe
But cryed anoon cocke cok and up he stert
As man that was afrayde in his hert
For naturally a best desireth to fle
Fro his contrary if he may it se
Though he neuir hadde seen it erst with his eye
This chaunteclere whan he gan him aspy
He wolde haue fledde but that the fox anon
Sayd gentyl sir allas what wyl ye doon
Be ye afrayde of me that am youre frende
Now certis I were wers than a feend
If I to you wolde harme or vilony
I am nat come youre counseyl to aspye
But truly the cause of my comyng
Was only to here how ye syng
For truly ye haue as mery a steuyn
As any aungel hath that is in heuyn
Therwith ye haue of musyke more felyng

Than hadde boece or any that can ſyng
My lorde youre fadez god his ſoule bleſſe
And eke youz modze of hez gentrynes
Haue in my houſe be to my grete eaſe
And certis ſir ful fayne wolde I you pleaſe
But for men ſpeke of ſyngyng I wolde ſay
So moot I bruke wele myn eyn tWey
Haue you ne herd I neuir may ſo ſyng
As dyd youz fadez in the mornyng
Certis it was of herte alle the ſong
And for to make his voyce the moze ſtrong
He wolde ſo peyne him that with bothe his eyn
He muſt ſwynke ſo loude he muſt cryen
And ſtonde vpon his typtoos ther with alle
And ſtretche forth his necke long and ſmalle
And eke he was of ſuche diſcrecioun
That ther was no man in no regioun
That him in ſong or wyſdome myght paſſe
I haue wele redde dan burnel the aſſe
Among his verſe how that there was a cok
For that a preſtes ſone yaf him a knok
Vpon his leggys while he was yong and nyce
He made him for to leſe his benefice
But certeyn there is no compariſon
Bet wixte the wyſdome and diſcrecioun
Of youre fadez and of his ſubtelte
Now ſyngith ſir for ſeint charite
Let ſe can ye youz fadre countrefete
This chaunteclere his wynges gan to bete
As man that conde nat his treaſon eſpye
So was he rauyſſhed with his flatery
Allas ye lordes many a falſe flaterour
Is in youz courte and many a falſe loſyngeour

That please you moche more by my feyth
Than he that sothfastnes vnto sayth
Redith ecclesiaste of flatery
Be ware ye lordes of theire trechery
This chaunteclere stood vpon his toos
Stretchyng his neche and helde his eyn cloos
And gan to crowe loude for the nones
And dan russel the foy stert vp at onys
And be gorget hent chanteclere
And on his bake toward the wode him bere
And yet was ther no man that him sued
O destiny that mayst nat be eschewed
Alas that chaunteclere fleWe fro the bemys
Allas his wyf raught nat of dremys
And on a fryday fyl alle this my schaunce
O venus that art goddes of plesaunce
Sithen that thy seruaunt was this chaunteclere
And in thy seruyce dyd alle his power
More for delyte than the worlde to multiply
Why Woldest thou suffre him thy day to dye
O gaufride dere mayster souerayn
That Whan the worthy kyng Richard Was slayn
With shot compleyndest his deth so sore
Why ne hadde I thy science and thy lore
The friday for to chyde as dyd ye
For on a fridday shortly slayn Was he
Than Wolde I shewe you how that I coude pleyn
For chaunteclere dride and for his peyn
Certis suche crye ne lamentacioun
Nas neuer of ladies made Whan that Ilion
Was Wonne. and pirrus With his bright swerde
Whan he hent kyng priame by the berde
And slewe him as sayth eneydos

As made al the hennys in the cloos
Whan that they hadde of chaunteclere the sight
But souerainly dame partelote shright
Full lowder than dyd hasdrubales wyf
Whan that her husbonde had lost his lyf
And that the Romaynes hadde brent cartage
She was so ful of turment and of rage
That wylfully into the fyre she stert
And brent her self with a stedefast hert
O woful hennys right so cryden ye
As whan that nero brent the cyte
Of Rome cryde the senatoures wyues
For that their husbondes sholde lese their lyues
Withouten gylt nero hath them slayn
Now wol I turne to my tale agayn
This sely wydowe and her doughters two
Herde the hennes crye and make wo
And out at the doore stert they anoon
And sawe the foy towarde the wode goon
And bare vpon his bake the cocke away
Any cryde oute and harowe and welawey
A ha the foy and after him they ran
And eke with staues many an other man
Ran colle oure doge talbot and garlond
And malkyn with her distaf in her honde
Ran cow and calf and eke the the verry hogges
For they so sore aferde were of the dogges
And shoutyng of men and of women eke
They ran so theire hert thought to breke
They yelleyn as feendes doon in helle
The dokes cryde as men wolde them quelle
The gees for fere oure the trees
Out of the hyues the swarme of bees

So hidous was the noyse a benedicite
Certis Jache straw ne his menye
Ne made neuir shoutes half so shrille
Whan that they wolde any flemyng hylle
As that day was made vpon the foy
Of bras they bleWe the trompes and of boy
Of horn and bone in which they bleWe and pouppyd
And therWith they shrikyd and shoutyd
It semyd as thoughe heuyn sholde falle
Now gode men I pray you herkyn alle
Lo how fortune turneth sodenly
The hope and the pryde of hir enymye
This cocke that lay vpon the foxes backe
In alle his dride vnto the foy he spake
And sayd sir if I Were as ye
yet shoulde I say as wys god helpe me
Turneth ayen ye proude cherles alle
A very pestilence vpon you falle
Now am I come vnto this Wode syde
Maugre youre hede the cocke shal here abyde
I wyl him ete in feyth and that anoon
The foy answerd in feyth it shalbe doon
And as he spake the Worde alle sodenly
This cocke brake from his mouthe deliuerly
And high vpon a tre he fleWe anoon
And Whan the foy sawe that he Was goon
Allas quod he o chaunteclere allas
I haue quod he do to you grete trespaas
In as moche as I made you aferde
When I you hent and brought oute of youre yerde
But sir I dyd it nat in no Wyched entent
Come doun and I shal telle you What I ment
I shalle you say soth god helpe me so

Nay than quod he I shrewe vs both two
And first I shrewe my self bothe blode and bones
If thou begyle me oftez than ones
Thou shalt nomoze with thy flatery
Do me synge with a wynkyng eye
Foz he that wynketh when he sholde se
Al wylfully godlet him neuer the
Nay quod the foy but god geue him myschaunce
That is so indiscrete of gouernaunce
That iangeleth whan he sholde holde his pees
Lo suche it is foz to be recheles
And neglegent and truste on flatery
And ye that holde this tale a foly
As of a foy and a cocke and an henne
Taketh the moralite good men
Foz seint poule sayth alle that writen is
To oure doctrine it is writen ywys
Taketh the fruyte and let the chaffe be stylle
Now gode god if that it be thy wylle
As sayde my lozde god make vs alle gode men
And bryng vs to thy high blysse amen

Here begynneth the manciples prologue

Ir nonnes preest oure hooste sayde anoon
Blessed be thy breche and euery stoon
This a mery tale of chaunteclere
But by my trouth if thou were seculere
Thou woldest be a tredfoule a right
Foz if thou haue corage as thou hast myght
The were nede of hennes as I wene
Ye moze than seuyn tymes seuentene
Se whiche brawnes hath this gentyl preest
So grete a neche and suche a large breest
He lokith as a sparhauke with his eyen

Him nedith nat his colour for to dyen
With brasyl ne with grayn of portyngale
But sir sayre falle you for youre tale
And after that he with ful mery chere
Sayd vnto an man as ye shalle here
Wot ye nat where there stondith a lytel toun
Whiche that is clyppd bob vp and doun
Vndre the blee in caunterbery Way
There gan oure hoost to iape and to pley
And sayd sires What dun is in the myre
Is there no man for prayer ne for hyre
That wol awake oure felow behynde
A theef myght him ful lyghtly robbe and bynde
Se how he nappith se for cockes bones
How he wol falle from his horse at onys
Is that a cok of london With myschaunce
Do him comfort he know with his penaunce
For he shalle tel a tale by my fay
Al though it be nat worth a botel hay
Awake thou cok quod he god gyue the sorowe
What ayleth the to slepe by the morowe
Hast thou hadde fleen al nyght or art thou dronke
Or hast thou al nyght with sommne quene y swonke
So that thou mayst nat holde vp thy hede
This cook that was ful pale and nothyng rede
Sayde oure hoost so god my soule blesse
There is falle on me grete heuynes
Nat I nat Why me were leuer to slepe
Then the best galon of wyne in chepe
Wele quod the manciple if may do the ease
To the sir cok and to no wight wight displease
Whiche that here ryde in this company
And if oure hoost wol of his curtesy

The manciples prologue

I wol as now excuse the of thy tale
For in gode feyth thy bysaye is ful pale
Thyn eyen dasawen sothtly as me thynketh
And wele I wote thy breth ful soure stynketh
That sheweth wele thou art nat wele disposed
Of me certayn thou shalt nat be glosed
Se how he galpith. lo this dronken wight
As though he wolde vs swelow anoon right
Holde cloos thy mouthe for thy fadres kyn
The deuyl of helle set his fote therin
Thy cursed breth wol enfecte vs alle
Fy stynkyng swyne fy foule moot the befalle
Takith hede sires of this lusty man
Now swete sir wol ye iuste at the ban
Therto me thynketh ye be wele shape
I trowe that ye haue dronke wyne ape
And that is whan men play at the strawe
And with his speche the cook wexed al wrawe
And on the manciple he gan to nodde fast
For lacke of speche a doun the horse him cast
Where as he lay tyl that men him vp toke
This was a fayre cheuesaunce of a cook
Allas that he ne hadde holde him by his ladyl
And or that he ayen were in his sadyl
There was a grete shouyng bothe to and fro
To lyft him vp and mekyl care and wo
So vnweldy was this sely palled goost
And to the manciple than spake oure hoost
Bicause that drynke hath dominacioun
Vpon this man. by my saluacioun
I trowe he wdely wol he telle his tale
For were it wyne or olde moyste ale
That he hath dronke he spekith so in his nose

And fnesith fast and ehe he hath the pose
He hath also to do moze than ynough
To hepe him on his caple oute of the slough
And if he falle from his caple eftsone
Than shal we alle haue ynough to done
In lyftyng vp his dronken corps
Tel on thy tale of him make I no force
But yet manciple in feyth thou arte to nyce
Thus openly to repzoue him of his vyce
Another day he wol parauenture
Reclayme the and bryng the to lure
I mene he spehe wyl of smale thynges
And foz to pynche at thy rechnynges
That were nat honest if it cam to the preef
No quod the maunciple that were a grete myschief
So myght he bryng me in to the snare
yet hadde I leuer pay foz the mare
Which he rideth on than he sholde with me stryue
I wol nat wrathe him so moot I thryue
That I spake I sayde it but in bourde
And wote ye what I haue here in my gourde
A draught of wyne ye of a rype grape
And right anoon ye shal se a gode iape
This cook shal drynke therof if that I may
Vp peyne of my lyf he wol nat say nay
And certaynly to telle as it was
Of this he sset the cook dranke fast alias
What nedith it he dranke ynough bifozn
And when he hadde pouped in his hozn
To the manciple he toke the gourde agayn
And of the drynke the cooke was ful fayn
And thanked him in suche wyse as he coude
Than gan oure hoost to laughe wondre loude

And sayde I se wele it is necessary
Where that we goon gode drynke with vs to cary
For that wol turne rancor and disease
To accorde and loue and many a worde to pease
O bacus y blissed be thy holy name
That so canst turne ernest into game
Worship and thanke be to thy deyte
Of that matere ye gete no more of me
Tel on thy tale thou manciple I the pray
Wele sir quod he herkneth what I say

Here endith the manciples prologue
And begynneth his tale



Whan phebus duellyd here in erthe a doun
As olde bokes makyn mencioun
He was the moost lusty bachelere
Of alle the worlde and eke the best archere
He slewe pheton the serpent as hem lay
Slepyng ayenst the sonne vpon a day
And many a nother noble worthy dede

He with his bowe wrought as men may rede
Pleye he coude on euery mynstralcy
And syngen that it was a melody
To here of his clere voyce the soun
Certis the kyng of Thebes amphioun
That with his song walled the cyte
Coude neuir syng half so wele as he
Therto he was the semelyest man
That is or was sithen the worlde began
What nedith it his feture to discryue
For in this worlde was there no man so fayre alyue
He was therwith fulfylled of gentylnes
Of honoure and of parfyte worthynes
This phebus that was floure of bachelery
As wele in fredom as in chyualry
For his disporte in signe eke of victory
Of pheton so as telleth vs the story
Was wont to bere in his honde a bowe
Now hadde this phebus in his house a crowe
Within a cage y fostryd many a day
And taughte it spekе as men teche a iay
Whyte was this crowe as is a mylke whyte swan
And countrefetyd the speche of euery man
He coude whan he shulde telle a tale
Ther was in alle this worlde no nyghtyngale
He coude by an hundred thousand dele
Syngе so wonderly merily and wele
Now hadde this phebus in his house a wyf
Which that he lovyd more than his lyf
And nyght and day dyd euir his diligence
Her for to plese and do her reuerence
Save only the soth if I shalle sayn
Jelous he was and wolde haue kept her fayne

For him were lothe iaped for to be
And so is euery wight in ſuche degre
But al for naught for it auayled nought
A gode wyf that is clene of werke and thought
Sholde nat be kept in noon awayte certayn
And truly the laboure is in veyn
To kepe a ſhrewe for it wol nat be
This holde I for a verry nycete
To ſpylle laboure for to kepe wyues
Thus writen olde clerkes in theire lyues
But now to purpos as I firſt began
This worthy phebus doth alle that he can
To pleſen her wenyng' through ſuche pleſaunce
And for his manhode and for his gouernaunce
That no man ſholde put him fro her grace
But god it wote there may no mannen brace
As to diſtreyne a thyng whiche that nature
Hath naturally ſet in a creature
Take any byrde and put him in a cage
And do alle thyn entent and thy corage
To foſtre it tenderly with mete and drynke
Of al deyntees that thou canſt bethynke
And kepe it alſo clenly as thou may
Al though his cage of golde be neuir ſo gay
yet hath this byrde by twenty thouſand folde
Lener in a foreſt that is wylde and colde
Go ete wormes and ſuche wrechidneſſe
For euir this byrde wol do his beſyneſſe
To aſcape oute of his cage whan he may
His liberte the byrde deſireth ay
Let take a cat and foſtre her with mylke
And tendre fleſſhe and make her couche of ſilke
And let her ſe a mouſe go by the walle

Anoon she weyueth flesshe and couche and al
And euery deynte that is in that house
Suche appetyte hath she to eten mous
Lo here hath lust his domynacioun
And appetyte flemyth discrecioun
A she wolf hath also a bylens kynde
The lewdest wolf that she may fynde
Or leest of reputacion that wyl she take
In tyme whan her lust to haue a make
Al these ensamples speke I by these men
That been vntrue and nothyng by women
For men haue euir a licorous appetyte
On lower thyng to parfourme theire delyte
Than on theire wyues be they neuir so fayr
Ne neuir so true ne neuir so debonayre
Flesshe is so newfangle with myschaunce
That we ne can in no thyng haue plesaunce
That sowneth vnto vertue any while
Thus phebus whiche that thought no gyle
Disceyued was for alle his iolite.
For vndre him a nother hadde she
A man of lytel reputacioun
Nought worth to phebus in comparisoun
The more harme is. it happith oft so
Of whiche there cometh moche harme and wo
And so befyl whan phebus was absent
His wyf anoon hath for her lemman sent
Her lemman certes that is a knaupsshe speche
Forgeue it me and that I you beseche
The wyse plato sayth as ye may rede
The worde must nede accorde with the dede
If men sholde telle propirly a thyng
The worde must cosyn be to the worthyng

Jam a boystous man right thus say I
There is but lytel difference truly
Betwixte a wyf that is of high degre
If of her body dishoneste she be
And a poze wenche other than this
If it so be they werke bothe amys
But that the gentyl is in state aboue
She shal be cleppd his lady and his loue
And for that other is a poure woman
She shalle be cleppd his wenche or his lemman
And god it wote myn owne dere brother
Men lay as lowe that one as that other
Right so betwixt a tytles tyraunt
And an outlawe or a theef erraunt
The same I say there is no difference
To Alisaundre was tolde this sentence
That for the tyraunt is of greter myght
By force of meyne to slee doun a right
And brenne house and hoom and make al playn
Lo therfore is he cleppd a capdeyn
And for the outelawh hath but smalle menye
And may nat do so grete an harme as he
Ne bryng a countre to so grete myschief
Men clepe him an outlawe or a theef
But for I am a man nat textuele
I wol nat telle of textes neuir a deel
I wol go to my tale as I began
Whan phebus wyf hadde sent for her lemman
Anoon they wrought alle their lust bolage
This white crowe that hyng ay in the cage
Behelde their werke and sayde neuir a worde
And whan home was come phebus the lorde
This crowe song cuckow cuckow cuckow

What byrde quod phebus What ſyngeſt thou
Ne were thou nat wont ſo merily to ſyng
That to my herte it was a reioyſyng
To here this boyce allas what ſong is this
By god quod he I ſyng nat amys
Phebus quod he for alle thy worthynes
For alle thy beaute and thy gentylnes
For al thy ſong and alle thy mynſtralcye
For al thy waytyng blered is thyn eye
With one of lytel reputacioun
Nat worth to the in compariſoun
The mountenaunce of a gnat ſo moot I thryue
For on thy bedde thy wyf I ſawe hym ſwyue
What wol ye more the crowe anoon hym tolde
By ſadde tokenes and by wordes bolde
How that his wyf hadde doon her lechery
Hym to grte ſhame and to grete velony
And tolde hym eft he ſawe it with his eyen
This phebus gan a way warde for to pryen
Hym thought his wofull hert braſt a two
His bowe he bent and ſet therin a flo
And in his ire he hath his wyf ſlayn
This is the effecte ther is more to ſayn
For ſorow wherof he brake his mynſtralcy
Bothe harpe and lute geterne and ſawtry
And eke he brake his arowes and his bowe
And after that thus ſpake he to the crowe
Traytoure quod he with tongue of ſcorpioun
Thou haſt me brought to my confuſioun
Allas that I was wrought why nere I dede
O dere wyf o gemme of luſtihede
That were to me ſo ſadde and eke to trewe
Now lyeſt thou dede with face pale of hewe

Ful gyltles that durst I ſwere it by bys
O rabel honde to do ſo foule amys
O trouble wytte o ire recheleſſe
That vnauyſed ſynneſt gyltles
O wantruſt fulle of falſe ſuſpecioun
Where was thy wytte and thy diſcrecioun
O euery man be ware of rechelnes
Ne troWe no thyng Without ſtrong wytnes
Smyte nat to ſone or thou wytte Why
And be auyſed Wele and ſikerly
Or ye do any execucioun
Vpon youre ire for ſuſpecioun
Alias a thouſand folke haue rekyl ire
Fully fordoon and brought them in the myre
Alias for ſorowe I Wol my ſelf ſlee
And to the crowe o falſe theef ſayde he
I Wol quyte anoon thy falſe tale
Thou ſong Whilom lyke a nyghtyngale
Now ſhalt thou falſe theef thy ſong forgon
Ek thy White fetheres euerichone
Ne neuir in al thy lyf ſhalt thou ſpeke
Thus ſhal men on a traytoure be Wreke
Thou and thyn offspryng euir ſhal be blake
Ne neuir ſWete noyes ſhal ye make
But euir crye ayenſt tempeſt and rayne
In token that through the my Wyf is ſlayn
And to the crowe he ſtert and that anoon
And pulled of his White fetheres euerichone
And made him blacke and reft him al his ſong
And ek his ſpeche and oute at the doze him ſlong
Vnto the deuyl Whiche I him betake
And for this cauſe be al crowes blake
Lordynges by theſe enſamples I Wol you pray

Be ware and take kepe what I ſay
Ne telleth neuir no man in youre lyf
How that a nother man hath dight his wif
He wol you hate mortally certayn
Dan Salamon as wyſe clerkes ſayn
Techith a man to kepe his tongue wele
But as I ſayde I am nat teytuele
But natheles thus taught me my dame
My ſonne thynke on the crowe a goddes name
My ſone kepe wele thy tongue and kepe thy frende
A wycked tongue is worſe than a feende
My ſone from a feende men may them bleſſe
My ſone god of his endeles goodneſſe
Wadded a tongue with tethe and lyppes ete
For man ſholde him auyſe what he ſpeke
My ſone ful oft for to mekyl ſpeche
Hath many a man be ſpylt as clerkes teche
But forlytel ſpeche ſpoken auyſedly
Is no man ſhent to ſpeke generally
My ſone thy tongue ſholdeſt thou reſtrayn
At al tyme but whan thou dooſt thy peyne
To ſpeke of god in honoure and prayer
The firſt vertue ſone if thou wylt leze
Is to reſtreyne and kepe wele thy tongue
Thus lerne children whan they be yong
My ſone of mekyl ſpekyng vn auyſed
There laſſe ſpekyng hadde ynough ſuffiſed
Cometh mekyl harme thus was me taughte
In mekyl ſpeche ſynne wanteth naught
Woteſt thou wherfore a rabel tongue ſerueth
Right as a ſwerde forcutteth and forcarueth
An arme a two my dere ſone right ſo
A tongue cutteth frendſhippe alſe a two

A iangelez is to god abhompnable
Rede Salamon so wyse and honourable
Rede daupd and his psalmes. rede seneke
My sone speke nat ne With thy hede thou beke
Dissimyl as thou were def if that thou here
The iangelourc speketh of parlous matere
The flemyng sayth lerne if that thou lyst
That lytel iangleyng causith grete rest
My sone if thou no wycked Worde hast sayd
The daz nat drede foz to be bewrayed
But he that hath myssayde ȝ daz Wele sayn
He may by no Wey clepe his Worde agayn
Thyng that is sayde is sayde and forthe it goth
Though him repente oz him be neuz solothe
He is thralle to him to Whom he hath sayde
A talz foz Whiche he is now eupl appayed
My sone be Ware and be none autouz newe
Of tydinges Whethez they be falsse oz trewe
Where so thou come among high oz lowe
Kepe Wele thy tounge and thynke on the crowe

Here endith the manciples tale
And begynneth the parsones prologue

By that the manciple hadde his tale endyd
The soune fro the southe syde is discended
So lowe that it Was nat to my sight
Degrees of fyue and twenty of hight
Ten at the clokc it Was so as ȝ gesse
Foz enleuyn foot a lytel moze oz lesse
My shadowe Was at that tyme as there
Of suche feet as my lengith parted Were
In sey feet equalky of proporcioun

Therwith the mones exaltacioun
J mene Libra alwey gan ascende
As were entryng in the thorpes ende
For whiche oure hoost as he was wont to gye
Ay in this caas this ioly company
Sayde in this wyse lordynges euerichone
Now lacketh vs no tale more than one
Fulfylled is my sentence and my decre
Who wol now telle a tale let se
Almoost fulfylled is myn ordenaunce
J pray to god so yeue him right gode chaunce
That telleth this tale to vs lustily
Sir preest quod he art thou a vycary
Or art thou a parson say sothe by thy fey
Be what thou be breke thou nat oure play
For euery man save thou haue tolde his tale
Vnbocle and spe we be what is in thy male
For truly me thynketh by thy chere
Thou sholdest knyt vp wele a grete matere
Tel vs a fable anoon for cokes bones
This parson him answerd alle at onys
Thou getyst fable none tolde for me
For poule that writeth to Tymothe
Repreuyth them that wayuen sothfastnes
And techen fables and suche wrecchednes
Why sholde J sawe draf oute of my fyst
When J may save whete if that me lyst
For whiche J say if that ye lyst to here
Moralite and of vertuous matere
And than if ye wyl yeue me audience
J wolde ful fayne at cristes reuerence
Done you leeful plesaunce as J can
But trustith wele J am a sotheryn man

The parsonnes prologue

I can nat geste rum ram ruf by lettre
And god wote ryme holde I but lytel bettre
And therfore if ye lust I wol nat glose
I wol you telle a lytel tale in prose
To knytte up al this feest and make an ende
And Jesu for his grace wytte me sende
To shewe you the wey in this viage
Of thylke parfyte glorious pylgramage
That highte ierusalem celestialle
And if ye vouchesauf anon I shalle
Begynne upon my tale for whiche I pray
Tel youre aller I can no bettre say
But nathelesse this meditacioun
I put it ay undre correctioun
Of clerkes for I am nat textuelle
I take but the sentence trustith wele
Therfore I make protestacioun
That I wol stonde to correctioun
Upon this worde we haue assentyd sone
For as it semyd it was for to doon
To enden in som vertuous sentence
And for to yeue him space and audience
And badde oure hoost he sholde to him say
That alle we to telle his tale him pray
Oure hoost hadde the wordes for vs alle
Sir preest quod he now fayre moot you befalle
Sayth what ye lyst and we shal gladly here
And with that worde he sayd in this manere
Telleth quod he youre meditacioun
But hastith you the sonne wol adoun
Beth fructuous and that in lytel space
And to do wele god sende you his grace

Here endith the parsones prologue

And here begynneth his tale



Jheremie vi. State super vias et videte et interrogate de viis antiquis. que sit via bona. et ambulate in ea. et inuenietis refrigerium animabz vestris.

O Dr swete lord God of heuē that no man wyl perisshe but wyll that we comē al to the knowlechyng of hym and to the blysful lyf that is pardurable amonesheth vs by the prophete Jheremye ꝑ saith in this wyse. stondeth vpon the weyes. and see. and aye ye of olde pathis. that is to saye of olde sentencis whiche is good weye. And walketh in ꝑ weye and ꝑ is refresshyng for your sowlys. Many ben the weyes spirituel that leden folke to our lord ihū Cryste. And to the regne of glorye. Of whiche weyes: There is a ful noble weye and wel couenable whiche may not faylle to man ne to womā that thrugh synne hath misgoon fro the ryght weye of Jherusalem celestrall. And this weye is cleped penytence. Of whiche man shold gladly herken and enquyre with al his herte to wete. what is penytence or penaunce. And wite whens is clepyd penytence. And how many maners ben the actions of werchyng of penytence. And how many spyces there be of penytence. and whiche thynges behouen and appertenen to.

penytence. Saynt ambrose sayth þ penytẽce is the plenynge of the man for the gylthe that he hath doo.
And nomore to doo ony thynge for the whiche hym ought to pleyne.
And som doctor sayth. that penaunce is the weymentynge of man that sorowth for his synne. And pyneth hym self for he hath mysdon. Penytence wyth certeyn circumstance is verry repentaunce of man that holdeth hym self in sorowe & other peyne for his gyltes. And for he shal be verry penytent. he shal first bewayle the synnes that he hath don. And stedfastly purpose in his herte to haue shrift of mouth. And to doo satisfaction end neuer for to do thinge for whiche hym oughte more to bewayle or complayne. and to contynue in good werkis Or elles his repentaunte may not auayle. For as sayth saint Isodre. he is a Japar and a gabbar and not verry repentaunte that eftsones doth thyng for whiche hym oweth to repente ne stinte to doo synne. may not auayle.
But neuertheles men shold take hope that at euery tyme that men falleth be it neuer so ofte that he may arise thourgh penytence yf he haue grace. But certeynly it is grete doubte. For as sayth Saynt Gregore. Whethe ariseth he out of his synne. that is charged of cursyd vsage.
And therfore repentaunte folke that stynte for to synne and for to lete synne or synne forlete thym. Holy chyrche holdeth hem sykker of her saluacion. And he that synneth and verryly repenteth hym in hys laste. holy chirche hopyth hys saluacion by the grete mercy of our Lord Jhũ Cryste for his repentaunce.
But take ye the sykker and certayn waye. And now sythe I haue declared yow what thyng is penaunce

Now shul ye vnderstonde that there be thre actions. The first is that a man be baptised after that he hath synneth. Saynt Augustyn sayth but he be penytent for hys olde synful lyf. he may not begynne the newe clene lyf. For yf he be baptysed wythout penytence for his olde gylte. he receyueth the marke of baptesme. But not the grace ne the remyssion of his synnes tyl he haue verry repentaunce. Another defaute is that men done dedely synne after they haue receyued baptesme. The thirde defaute is that men falle in venyal synnes after her baptesme fro day to day. Therof sayth saynt Augustyn that penaunce of good and hũble folke is the penytence of euery day. The spyces of penaũce ben thre. That one of them is solempne. Another is comen and the thirde is pryue. That penaũce þ is solẽpne is in two maners. as is to be put out of holy chirche in lenton for slaughter of children and suche maner thynges. Another is whan a man hath synned openly. of whiche synne the fame is openly knowen in the contre and theune holy chyrche by Jugement distreyneth hym for to

do open penaunce Domme penaun ce is that prestes enioyne men comē ly in certayn caas as for to go per aueuture naked on pylgrymage or barefoot Preuy penaūce is that men doon al day for preuy synnes of whi che we shryuen vs prevely and recey ven preuy penaunce. Now shal thou vnderstonde what behoueth & is necessarye to euery preuy penytēt And these stonde in thre. Contrycion of herte. Confessyon of mouth. And satisfaction For whiche Johan Cri sostom sayth. Penytence distreineth to accepte benygnly euery peyne þ is hym enioyned wyth contrycion of herte and shryste of mouth wyth sa tisfaction and worchyng of alle ma ner humylyte. And this is fruytfull penaunce ayenst tho thynges in whi che we wrathen our Lord Jhū cryst This is to saye delyte in thynkyng. By recheleshes in spekyng. by wyc ked and synful worchyng. Ayenst these wycked gyltes is penaunce. That may be lykened to a tree. The rote of this tre is contrycion, that hy deth hym in the herte of hym that is veray repentante ryght as the rote of a tree hydeth hym in the erthe. Of the rote of contrycion sprongeth a stalke that bereth braunchys & leues of confessyon. And the flesshe. Of whiche cryste sayth in the gospel. Do ye dygne fruyt off penytence. For by thys fruyt men may knowe this tree and not by the rote that is hyd in the herte of a man Ner by the braunchys ne leuys of cō fessyon. And therfore our lorde Jhū Cryste sayth thus. By the fruyt of them ye shal knowe them. Of thys rote sprongeth a seed of grace which seed is moder of sykernes. And this seed is eger & hote. the grace of thys seed springeth of god through the re membraūce of the day of dome & of the peynes of helle. of this mater. Salamon sayth that in the drede of god a man forsaketh his synne. The hete of this seed is the loue of god & desyryng of the Joye perdurable. This hete drawyth the herte of man to god and doth hym hate his synne For there is nothyng that sauoureth so sote to a chylde as the myelke of his norce. Ne no thyng is to hym more abhominable than that myl ke whan it is medled wyth other mylke. Ryght so the synful man þ loueth his synne. hit semeth it is to hym most swete of ony thyng. But fro þ tyme that he knowth sadly oure lord Jhesu Cryst and desyreth the lyf pardurable. There is to hym no thyng more abhominable. For loth the loue of god & the lawe of god. For whiche dauyd the prophete sayth I haue loued thy lawe & hated wyc kednes. he þ loueth god kepeth hys lawe and his worde. This the prophe te dampned enspyred vpon the vysyon of Nabogodonosor whan he coun cyled hym to do penaunce. Penaun ce is of the tree of lyf to them that it receyuen & he that holdeth hym ver ry penytēt is blessyd after the sentence

of salamon In this penytence ordēn
tryon man shal vnderstonde four
thynges. that is to saye what is con-
tricyon. And whiche ben the causes
meuen a man to contricion. And
how he shold be contrite. And what
contricion auayleth to the sowle.
Than it is thus that cōtricion is the
verry sorow that a man resteyneth
in his herte for his synnes with sad
purpose to shryue hym and to do pe
naunce and neuer more to do synne
And this sorowe shal be in this ma-
ner as sayth saint Bernard. It shal
be greuous and heuy / wel sharpe
and poynaunt in herte. Fyrst for a
man hath agylted his lorde and hys
creatour. And more sharpe and poy-
naunt for he hath agylted his fader
celestyal And yet more sharp and
poynaunt for he hath wrathyd hym
and agylte hym that bought hym
with his precyous blood hath dely-
uered hym fro the bondes of synne
and fro the cruelte of the deuyll and
fro the peynes of helle These causes
that meue a man to contricion ben
xii. Fyrst a man shal remembre
hym of his synnes but lo̅e that re-
membraunce be to hym no delyte by
no weye but shame and sorowe for
his gylte For Job sayth synful men
don worthy be worthy of confusion. /
therfor sayth Ezechyel I wyl Remē
bre me all the yeres of my lyf in bit-
ternes of my herte. And god sayth in
the apocalipse Remembre ye to fro
whens that ye be falle For before the
tyme that ye synned ye were the chil-
dren of god and symmys of the reg-
ne of god. But for your synne ye be
waxen thral and ful membris of the
fende. hate of aungels. sklaundre
of holy chirche. And fode of the fals
serpent. perpetuel matier of the fyre
of helle And that more foule and ab-
hominable for pe trespace as oft ty-
me as doth the hound that tourned
agayn to ete his owen spuyng.
And yet fonler for your long contyn-
uyng in synne and your synful vsage. For whiche ye be rotten in your
synnes as a beest in his dung. Su-
che manet thoughtys maketh a mā
a shamed for his synnes and no delyte as sayth the prophete Ezechyel. ye
shul remembre you of your weyes.
and they shal displese yow Bothely
synnes ben the wayes that lede folk
to helle. The second cause that ought
to make a man haue desdaygn of
synne is this as sayth Peter. who so
doth synne is thral to synne. And sin
ne putteth a man in grete thraldom
And therfor sayth the prophete ezechy
el I wente sorowful and had disde-
ygn of my self Certes wel ought a
man haue dysdaygn of synne and
wyth drawe hym fro that thraldom
and bylonye. For lo what sayth se-
neke in this mater he sayth thus.
Though I wyst that neyther god ne
man shold neuer know it. yet wolde
I haue desdaygne for to doo synne:
And the same Seneke sayth I am
born to grettest thynges than to bee

thralle to my body. more thral may noman ne woman make of his body than yeue his body to synne. and were it the fowleste chorle or the fowleste woman that lyueth and leste off vale. yet he is charged and moost foul & moost in seruytude euer fro the hyer degre that a man falleth. To more is he thral & more to god & to the world vile & abhominable. Do good god wel ought a man haue disdeygne of synne syth that thourgh ꝑ there as he was fre now is he made bonde And therfore sayth saynt Austyn. yf thou hast disdaygne of thy seruaunt. yf he agylte or synne haue thou thenne no disdaygne that thou thy self sholdest do synne. Take rewarde of thyn owen vale we ꝑ thou ne be to foul to thy self ne to thyn. Alas we oughten they that haue disdayn to be seruaũtes & thral to synne More to be ashamed of him self: that god of his endles goodnes hath sette in hygh astate or yeue hym strenthe of body. beaute. prosperyte & bought hym fro the deth wyth his herte blod that they so vnkyndely agaynst hys gentylnes quyten them so vylepussy to slaughter of her owen sowlys. O good god ye wymmen that ben of grete beaute remembre pow on the prouerbe of Salamon he sayth he lykeneth a fair womã that is a fool of her body to a ryngе of golde that is worn in the grony of a sowe. For right as a sowe wrotyth in euery ordure. so wroteth she her beaute in stinkyng ordure of synne. The thirde cause that ought to meue a man to contricion is drede of the day of dome And the horrible peynes of helle For as saith saynt Jerome. At euery tyme ꝑ I remembre of the day of dome I quake for whã I ete or drynke or do what so I do. euer me semeth the trompe sowneth in myn eres. Ryseth vp ye ben dede and come ye to the Jugement. O good god mocke oughte a man to drede suche a Jugement there as we shal be al. As saith saynt Poule. Before the strayt Jugement of our Lord Jhesu Cryste. where as we shal make a generał cõgregacõ wher as no mã may be absente. For certes there auayleth none essoyne ne non excusacõ: not only that our fautes shal be Juged but eke our werkes shal openly be knowen. And ꝑ as sayth saynt Bernard There ne shal no pletyng auayle ne no sleyght. we shal yeue rekenyng of euery ydle worde. There shal we haue a Juge that may not be deceyued ne corrupt. and why for certis al our thoughtes be discouerd as to hym. ne for prayer ne for mede he wyl not be corrupt And also he saith The wrath of god wyl not spare no wyght for prayer ne for yefte. And therfore atte day of dome there is none hope. wherfore as saith saynt Anselme. ful grete angurysshe shal the synful folke haue at that tyme Where shal be the sterne: wroth Juge sitting above: vnder hym the horrible pyt of helle open to deuoure hym that wold not be knowe his synnes

whiche synnes shullen openly be shewed before god & euery creature.
And on the lift syde mo deuylls thā the herte may thynke for to harrye & drawe the synful soules to the pytte of helle. And wythin the hertes of folke shal be the betyng conscience. & wythout forth shal his werkis accuse hym. Thenne shal the wretchyd soule fle to hyde hym. But certes he may not hyde hym he must come forth & shewe hym For certes as saith saynt ihertome. the erthe shal cast hym out of hym and the see also and the ayer also that shal be ful of thunder clappis & lyghtnyng. Now sothly who so wyl remembre hym of thyse thynges I gesse that his synnes shal not tourne hym to delyte but to grete sorowe fro drede of the peyn of helle. And therfore sayth Job to god.
Suffre lord þ I may a while bewaile & bewepe or I go tetornyng to the derke erthe & couerid wyth derknes the londe of mysery and of derknes where as is shadow of deth where as there is none other ordeynaunce but grysly drede that euer shal laste. Lo here may ye se that Job prayed respyte a whyle to bewepe and wayle his trespaas. For sothly one day to respyte is better than alle the tresour of this world. And for as moche as a man may acquyte hym self by fore god by penytence in thys worlde and not by tresour: therfore sholde he praye to god to yeue hym respyte a whyle to bewepyn and bewaylen his trespaas. For certes all the sorowe that a man myght make fro the begynnyng of the world nys but a lytyl thynge at the regarde of of the sorow of helle. The cause why that Job clepeth the lond of derknes vnderstondyth that he clepyth it londe of erth for it is stable & neuer shal fayle derknes. For he that is in helle hath defaute of lyght naturel.
For certes the derke lyght that shalle come out of the fyre that euer shalle brenne shal torne hem al to peyne þ be in helle. For it sheweth hym al the horryble deuylles that them tormente couerd wyth the derknes of deth þ ben the synnes þ the wretchyd man hath doon. whyche that destourben hym to see the face of god. Ryght as a derke cloude betwene vs and the sonne. Londe of myserye by cause þ there be thre defautes ayenste thre thynges that folke of this world haue in this present lyf that is to saye honours. delytes. & ryches. Ayenste honour haue they in hell shame and confucion. For wel ye wote they clepen honour the reuerence that men don to men. But in helle is non honour ne reuerence For certes no more reuerence shal be there to a kynge than a knaue. For whiche god saith by the prophete Jheremye. The folke that me dispysen shal be in despyte. Honour is eke clepyd a grete lordshyp ther shal no wyght serue other but of harme & turmēte. Honour is eke clepyd grete dygnyte & hyghnes. but in helle shal they alle be fortrodē wyth deuylls as god sayth. The

horrypble deuylles shullen go and co-
mynn vpon the heeps of dampnyd
folke And this is for as moche that
the hyer that they were in present lyf
the more they shul be abated & defo-
wled in helle. ayenst the riches of this
world shal they haue myssese of po-
uerte. And this pouerte shal be in fo-
re thynges in defaute of tresour off
whiche Dauyd sayth. The riche fol-
ke embraceth & coueté in al her herte
the riches of this world shul slepe in
the slepyng of deth. as no thing shul
they synde in there hondes of al her
tresour And more ouer the myssese of
helle shal be in defaute of mete and
drynke For god sayth thus by moy-
ses. shal be wasted wyth hounger.
And the byrdes of helle shal deuoure
hem wyth bytter deth. And the galle
of the dragon her morcellys. And
ferther ouer her myssese shal be in de-
faute of clothyng for they shal be na-
kyd in body as of clothyng. Saue
the fyre in which they brenne & other
fylthes And naked shal they be in so
wle of a maner vertues. whiche that
is the clothyng of sowle. where ben
thenne the gay robys & the softe she-
tis and fyn shertis. Lo what saith
god of them by the yphete ysaye. þ
Vnder them shal be strawed mothes
& her couertours shal be of wormes
of helle: And forthermore her myssese
shal be in defaute of frendes for he is
not poure that hath good frendys.
but there is no frende. For neyther
god ne good creature shal be frende
to them. And euery of hem shal hate
other wyth dedely hate. The sones &
the doughters shal rebelle ayenst the
fader and moder. And kynrede
ayenst kynrede and chyden and des-
pyse eche other both day and nyght
as god sayth by the prophete myche-
as. And the louyng chyldren þ some
tyme loueden so flesshly euerych
of them wold ete other yf he myght.
For how sholde they loue to gyder in
the peynes of helle. whan they hated
eche other in the prosperite of this lyf
For truste wel her flesshly loue is de
dely hate as sayth the prophete Da-
uyd who so loueth wyckednes he ha
teth his owen sowle. And who so
hateth his owen sowle. Certes he
may loue none other wyght in noo
manere And therfore in helle is noo
frendshyp but euer the more cursing
the more chydyng and the more dede
ly hate is among them. And further
ouer they shal haue defautes of alle
maner delytes. for why. For delytes
ben appetytes of the wittes as syght
herynge. smellyng. sauouryng. and
touchyng but in helle her syghte shal
be ful of derknes. of smoke and ful
of teris. And her heeryng ful of wey
mentyng and of gruntyng of teth
as sayth Ihū crysle her noseryllys
shal be ful of stynkyng.
And as sayth ysaye the yphete. her
sauouryng shalle be fulel of bytter
galle. And as touchyng her body hit
shal be couerd wyth fyre that neuer
shal be quenchyd And wyth wormes

That neuer shal depe as god sayth by the mouth of ysaye. & for as moche as they shul not wene þ they mowe dye for peyn & by deth fle for peyn þ may they vnderstonde in the worde of Job that sayth that there is þ shadowe hath a lyknes of the thing of which it is shadowed right so fareth the peyne of helle. it is lyke dethe for the angupssh houble. & why. For it peyneth them euer as though men shold dye anon. But certes they shal not depe. For saynt gregore sayth. to caytyfs shal be dethe wythout deth & ende wythout ende & defaute with out fayling For her deth shal alway lyue. And her ende shal euer more be gynne. & her defaute shal neuer fayle And therfore sayth saynt Johan the Euangelistie They shall folowe deth and they shal not fynde hym and to desyre to depe & deth shal fle fro them And eke Job sayth that in helle is non ordre of rewle. And al be it so þ god hath created al in right ordre. & nothyng wythout ordre But al thinges be ordeyned and nomgred. yet neuertheles they þ be dampned be noo thyng in ordre ne holde non ordre.

For the erthe shal bere them no fruyt. For as the prophete Dauyd sayth. God shal destroye the fruyt of the erthe from them Ne water shalle yeue hem no moysture ne the eyen no clerenesshyng. ne the fyre no lyght. For as sayth saynt Basyle. The brennyng of the fyre of this worlde shal god yeue to hem that ben dampned in helle. But the lyght & the clerenes shal be yeuen in heuen to his children Right as the good man yeueth brede to his children & bones to hys houndes. And so they shal haue non hope to escape. And therfore speketh Job. Atte last there shal horrour and grisly drede dwelle wythouten ende horrour is alway drede of harme that is to come. And this drede shall euer dwelle in the hertes of them that ben dampned And therfor haue they lost al her hope for 8. causes. First for god þ is her Juge shal be wythouten mercy to them. ne they may not plese hym ne non of his halowes ne may pepe no thyng for their ransom ne they haue no boys to spekke to hym. ne they may not fle fro peyne. And therfore sayth salamon. the wycked man depeth. & whā he is dede he shal haue none hope to escape from peyne. who so wold wel understonde these peynes and bethynke hym wel that he hath deserued the peynes for his synnes. Certes he shold haue more talent to syghe and wepe than for to synge and for to pleye. For as sayth Salamon. who that hath science for to knowe peynes that ben establysshed and ordeyned for synne he wold forsake synne. That science sayth saynt Austyn maketh a man to weymenten in his herte. The fourth point that a man ought to make contricion for is the sorowful remembraunce of the good that he hath left to doo here in erthe and

ete the good that he hath lorn. Both
by the good werkys that he hath left
ether they be the good werkis that he
wrought er he fyl in to dedely synne
or ellys the good werkys þ he wrou
ght whyle he laye in dedely synne.
Bothely the good that he dyd before
ne that he fyl in dedely synne ben all
mortefyed astoned & dulled by the
eft synnyng The other werkes that
he wrought whylle he laye in synne
ben vtterly dede as to the lyf perdu
rable in heuen. Than thylke good
werkys that ben mortefyed by eft
synnyng whiche good werkes he did
whyles he was in charyte mowe ne
uer quyckyn ayen wythout verey re
strevnt and wythdrawyng the stren
ges of mannys corage and the me
lynges in his herte in suche maniere
as they ne skyppe out by anger ne
by yre. And therof sayth god by the
mouth of ezechyel. That yf the right
ful man retorne agayn from his rig
htwysnes and to wyrche wyckednes
shal he lyuen nay. For al the good
werkys that he hath wrought shulle
neuer be in remembraunce.
For he shal deye in his synne. And v
pon that chapitre sayth saynt Gre
gory thus that we shul vnderstonde
principally that whan we doo ded
ly synne it is nought. Nether for to
drawe in to memorye the good wer
kys that we haue wrought byforn
For certis in the werkyng of dedely
synne there is no trayste to good wer
ke that we haue doon beforn. That
is to saye as to haue therby the lyf
perdurable in heuen. But forthely
the good werkys that men don whyl
les they ben i dedely synne for as my
kyl as they were don in dedely synne
thye may neuer quyckyn. For certes
thinges þ neuer had lyf may neuer
quyckyn. And nevertheles al be it þ
they auayle not to haue the lyf per
durable. yet auayleth they to a bryd
ge of the peyn of helle Or ellys to ge
te temporel richesse. or ellys that god
wyl rather enlumyne and lyghten
the herte of the synfull man to haue
repentaunce. And ek they auayle to
a man to doo good werkys that the
fende haue the lasse power of his so
wle And thus the curteys lord Jhesu
Cryste wyl that no good werke be
loste. For in somwhat it shal auay
le. But for as moche that the good
werkes that men don whyles they
ben in good lyf ben al mortefyed by
synne folowyng. And ek sythe
al the good werkes that men doon
whyles they be in dedely synne ben
vtterly dede as for to haue the lyf
perdurable. wel may that man that
no good werkys doth synge that fressh
newe songe. Jay tout perdu
mon temps et mon labour.
For certes it bereuth a man goodd
nes and nature and ek the goodnes
of grace. for soth the grace of the ho
ly goost fareth as fyre that may not
be dole. For fyre fayleth anon as it
leseth his worchyng. Than
leseth the synful man the goodnes of
glorye that only is behoten to goode

men that labouren & werken. wel may he be sory thenne that oweth al his lyf to god as long as he lyueth. And eke as longe as he shal lyue. þ no goodnes hath to paye wyth his dette to god to whom he oweth al his lyf. For trust wel he shal yeue acoun tys. as sayth saynt Bernard. Of all the goodes that haue be yeuen hym in this present lyf. And how he hath despended them not so moche þ there shal perysshe an heer of his heed ne a moment of an houre that he ne shal yeue therof a rekenyng The fyfte thyng is that ought to meue a man to contricion is remembraūce of the passyon that our lord Jhū cryst suf fryd for our synnes. For as sayth saynt Bernard. whyles that I lyue I shal haue remembraūce of the tra uayles that our lord Jhū cryst suf fryd in prechyng. his werynes in tra uaylyng. his temptacions whan he fasted. his longe watchinges whan he prayd. his teris whan he wepte for pyte of good peple. the woo and the shame and the fylthe that men say den to hym. of the foule spyttynge þ men spytten in his face. of the buffet tys þ men yaf hym of the foule mou thes and of the foule repreuys þ men to hym sayden. of the nayles wyth the whiche he was nayled to the cros se And of alle the remenaunt of his passion that he suffryd for mannys synne and nothyng for his gylte.

And ye shal vnderstonde that euery manere ordre of ordenaūce is torned vp so doun. For it is soth that god & reson and sensualyte and the body of a man ben so ordeyned. that eue ryche of thyse four thynges shuld ha ue lordshyp ouer þ other as thus god shold haue lordshyp ouer reson. & reson ouer sensualyte ouer the body of mā but sothly in man semeth al this or der of ordenaunce is turned vp soo doun. And therfore thenne for as myche as the reson of man wyl not be subget ne obeysaunt to god that is lord by ryght. Therfore leseth it the lordshyp that it shold haue in sensu alyte and eke ouer the body of man And why for sensualyte rebelleth the ne ayenst reson. And vp that weye seyth reson his lordshyp ouer sensua lyte and ouer the body.

For ryght as reson is rebel to god Ryght so is sensualyte rebell to reson and the body also.

And certes thys ordenaunce. And thys rebellyon Oure Lorde Jhesu Cryst aboughte vpon his body well deer. And herkeneth in whiche wyse

For as myche thenne as reson is rebell to god therfore is man wor thy to haue sorowe and to be dede.

This suffryd Our Lord Jhesu for man after he was betrayed of hys dysciple and dystreined and boun de so that the bloode brast out at eue ry nayle of hys hondes. As sayth saynt Augustyn. & ferthermore for as myche as reson of man wyl not daunte sensualyte whan it may.

Therfore is man worthy to haue shame And this suffred oure Lorde Jhū cryst for man whan they spytte

in his vysage. And ferther ouer thē-
ne for as moche as the caytif body
of man is rebel both to reson and to
sensualite therfor it is worthy the deth
And this suffryd our Lord Jhū crist
for mā vpon the crosse. wher as ther
was no parte of his body fre wyth-
out grete peyn & bytter passion. And
al this suffred Jhesu crist that neuer
forfeteth. To moche am I peynd
for tho thynges that I neuer deser-
uyd and to myn yl defouled for fren
shyp that man is worthy to haue.
And therfore may the synfull man
wel saye as saint Bernard sayth.
A corsyd be the bytternes. For certes
after dyuerse dyscordaunces of oure
wyckednes was the passion of Jhū
Cryst p ordeyned in dyuerse thyn-
ges as thus Certes synful mannys
soule betrayed the deuyl by couetyse
of temporel prosperyte and scornes
by disceyt whan he cheseth flesshly de
lytes. & is tormented by Impacience
of aduersyte & despet by seruage in
subiection of synne. & atte last he is
slayn synally For this discordaun
ce of synful man. was Jhesu Cryst
first betrayed. And after þ was he
bound that cam for to vnbynde vs
of synne & of the peyne. Thēne was
he descouryed þ only shold be honou
ryd in al thynges & of alle thynges.
Thenne was his vysage despyte þ
ought to be dyspysed for to be seyn of
al mankynde. In whiche vysage
aungels desyren to loke. and therin
was vilensly despette Thēne was
he scorned þ no thyng had gylt. And
synally thenne was he crucyfyed
and slayn. Thenne were complisshed
the wordes of ysaye that sayth. He
was wounded for oure mysdedes &
defouled for our vylonyes. Now
syth þ Jhū Cryst toke on hym self
the peyne of al our wyckednes. my-
ght ought synful man to wepe & to
bewayle that for his synnes goddis
sone of heuen shold al this peyne en-
dure. The vi. thyng that ought
to meue a man to contrycion is the
hope of thre thinges that is to saye
forgeuenes of synne. and the yefte of
grace wel for to doo. And the ioye of
heuen wyth the whiche god shal gu-
erdon man for his good dedes. And
for as moche as Jhesu Cryst geueth
vs the yeftis of his grace and of his
soueryn bounte. Therfore is he cle-
pyd Jhesus nazarenus rex Judeor
Jhesus is for to say sauyor or salua
cion on whom men shul hope to ha-
ue forgeuenes of synnys. which that
is ryght saluacion of synnes. And
therfore said the aungel to Joseph
Thou shalt clepe his name Jhesus þ
shal saue his peple of her synnes. &
hereof saith seynt Peter. Ther is none
other name vnder heuē þ is geuen to
ony man by whiche a man may be
sauyd but only Jhesus. nazarenus
is as moche to saye as for flourisshing
in whiche a man shal hope that he þ
geueth hym tempsyd of synnys shal
also geue hym grace wel for to doo.

For in the flour is hope of fruyt

in tyme comyng. And in forgeuenes of synne hope of grace wel to doo.
I was ete done of thyn herte said ihesus & cleped for to entre. he that openeth to me shal haue forgeuenes of synnes I wyl entre in to him by my grace. and suppe wyth hym by the good werkes that he shal do whiche werkes ben the fode of god. And he shal soupe wyth me by the grete ioye that shal be yeuen to hym. Thus shal man hope that for his werkes of penaunce god shal yeue hym hys regne as he behoteth hym in the gospel. Now shal man vnderstonde in what maner shal be his oriaū I say hit shal be vniuersal & total. þis is to saye a man shal be veray repentaūt for alle his synnes that he hath don in delyte of his thought. For delyte is perylous. For ther be two maners of consentynges that one of them is cleped consentyng of affection. whā a man is meued to do synne ayenste the lawe of god. Al though his reson consente not to do synne in dede. yet seyn som doctours and men that suche delyte that dwelyth longe is ful perylous. al be it neuer so lyte. And also a man shold sorow namely for al þ euer he hath desyred ayenst the lawe of god wyth parfyth consentyng to the dede wherfore I say that many men repente hem neuer of suche thoughtes and delytes and neuer shryue hem of it but only of the dede of grete synnes outward. wherfor I saye that suche wycked delytes and wicked thoughtes ben subtyl beggelars of them that shalle be damned More ouer man ought to sorow for his wycked wordes and for his wicked dedes. For certes repentaunce of a synguler synne and not repentyng of alle his other synnes. or ellys repentynge hym of alle his other synnes & not of a synguler synne may not anaylle. For certes god almyghty is al good. And therfore he forgeueth al or ellys right nought. And therfore sayth saynt Austyn. I wote certeynly that god is enemye to euery synnar. And how than he þ observeth one synne. Shal he haue forgeuenes of the remenaūt of his other synnes. nay. & fertherouer cōtricion shold be wonder sorowful and angwysshous. & therfore yeueth him god pleynli his mercy. & therfor whā my sowle was angwysshos wythin me I had remēbraūce of God þ my prayer myght come. to hym. Forther ouer contricō must be cōtynuel & þ men haue stedfast purpose to shryue hem & for to amende hem of her lyff. Forsothly wholle contricion lasteth man may haue hope of forgeuenes And of this cometh hate of synne þ destroyet synne both in hym self & elle in other folke at his power. For whiche Dauyd saith. ye that louen god. hate wyckednes. For trusted wel to loue god is for to loue that he loueth and hate that he hateth.

The last thyng that a man shal vnderstonde in contricion is thys.

wherof auayleth contricion. I saye somtyme that contrycion delyuerpth a man fro synne. Of whiche dauyd sayth. I say quod dauyd. I purpose fermly to shryue me and thou lorde hast relyed my synne. And ryght so as contricion auayleth not wythout sayd purpose of shryfte and satisfaction. ryght soo confessyon ne satisfaction auayle not wythout contrycion. For moche contrycion destroyeth the pryson of helle and maketh werk and feble the strenth of the deuyl. And restoreth the yefte of the holy ghoost and of alle vertues and Intercleusyth the soule of synne and delyuereth the soule fro peyne of hell and fro the company of the deuyl. And fro seruage of synne. And restoryth to alle gooones spirytual ly to the companye and communyon of holy chyrche. And ferther ouer hit maketh hym that whylom sone of yre. to be the sone of grace. And alle these thynges he putteth to holy wurk And therfore he that wyl sette his entente to thyse thinges he were ful wise. For thenne he shold not ly al his lyf haue corage to synne But thenne his body and alle hys herte. he shold conformme to the scruyse of Jhū crist. And therfore do hym homage for certes our swete Lord Jhesu Cryste hath sparyd vs so benygnly ly oure folyes that yf he ne had pite on mannys soule. A sory songe myght we alle synge.

Explicit prima pars penitencie.

Incipit secunda pars.

The second parte of penytence is confessyon and that is synyne of contricion.

Now shal ye vnderstonde what is confessyon. and whether it ought nedes to be or none. and whiche thynges ben conenable to verry confessyon. Fyrst shalt thou vnderstonde þ confessyon is verry shewyng of synne to the preest. this is to saye verry. For he must confesse hym of alle the condicions that be longynge to hys synne as ferforth as he can. al must be sayd and nothyng excused ne hyde ne forwrappid and not auaūte hym of hys good werkys. And ferthermore it is necessarye to vnderstonde whens that synnes springen.

And how they encreecy. and wher ben springyng of synnes as sayth saint Poule ly this wyse. That right as by a mā synne entryd first ly to this world. And thrugh that synne deyde Ryght so deth entryd ly to alle men that synnedey. And this man was adam by whom þ synne entrid ly to this world whan he brake the commaūdement of god. & therfor he that first was so myghty þ he sholde not deyed becam suche one that he must nedes deye whether he wold or noo & al his pgenye þ is ly this world that ly þ maner synne deyen. lost þ ly the state of innocēce whā adā & eue were naked ly paradise & no sham had of her nakednes how þ þ serpēt þ was most wyly of al other bestys þ god had made said to the womā ymāded god to pouye shold not ete of euery

tre in paradyse. The woman answerd of the frupt sayd she of the trees in paradyse we feden vs. But sothly of the frupt of the tre that is in the myddel of paradyse. God forbad vs for to eten ne to touche it lest peraventure we shal dye. The serpent sayde to the woman: nay nay. ye shal not dye of deth. For soth god wote that what day that ye ete therof your eyen shalle open and ye shal be as goddes knowynge good and harm. The woman sawe that the tree was good to feding and fayre to the eye and delectable to the syght. She took of the frupt of the tre and ete of it. And yaf of it to her husbonde. And he eet. And anon the eyen of them both openyd. And whan they knewe that the were naketh. They sowyd of a fyg tree leeuys in maner of brechis to hyden her membrys.

Here may ye see that dedely synne hath first subiection of the fende As shewyth here by the adder. And afterward the delyte of the flesh as shewyth here by Eue. And after by consentyng of reson as shewyth by Adam. For trust wel though so were the fende one etemptyd that is to saye the flesh And frupt of satysfaction had delyte in beaute of the frupt defendyd. yet certes tyl that reson that is to saye. Adam consentyd to the etyng of the frupt. he stode hygh in the state of Innocence. Of that Adam to vs we that synne original. For of hym flesshly descended ben we al and engendryd of vile & corupt mater. and whan the soule is put in our body right anon is contract original synne. & ys was only peyne of concupyscence. whiche is afterward both peyne and synne. And therfore be we al born sones of wrathe and of dampnatyon perdurable yf ne were baptesme that we receyue whiche benymeth vs the culpe. But forsoth the peynes dwelle wyth vs as the temptacion. whiche peyn hyght concupiscencie. And this concupiscencie whan it is wrongfully disposed or ordeyned in man. hit maketh hym coueyte couetyse of flesshe and flesshly synne by syght of his eyen as to the erthely thynges.
And elle couetyse of hyghnes by pryde of herte. Now as for to speke of the first couetyse that is concupyssence after the lawe of our membrys ys were lawfully made and by ryghtful Jugement of god. I saye for as moche as a man is not obeyssaunt to god that is his lord. Therfore is his herte to hym disobeyssaunt. through concupiscencie. hit is Impossyble but he be tempted som tyme and noyed in his flesh to synne. And this thyng may not fayle as longe as he lyueth hit may wel weye feble and fayle by vertu of baptisme.

And by the grace of god thrugh penytence But fully shal it neuer quenche. That he ne shal somtyme be meuyd in hym self but yf he were all restreyned by sykenes or by malyce of sorsetye

or colde drynkes. For what sayth saynt Paule. The flesshe coueteth a-yenst the spirite. & the spirite ayenst the flesshe they ben so contrarye. And so stryuen that man may not doo al ieway as he walde. The same saynt Poule after his grete penaunce in water and in londe by nyght and by day by grete paryl and in grete payn in londe in grete fampyn and thrist in colde and ones stoned almost to deth

yet sayd he alas I catyf man. who shal delyuer me fro the pryson of my catyf body. And saynt Jherome sayd. whan he long tyme hade dwellyd in desert wher as he had no cõpany but bestes wher as he had no mete but herbis & water to his drynke no bed but the naked erthe. For whiche his flesshe was blacke as an ethyope for hete & destroyed for colde yet sayd he the brennyng of lecherye boylled in alle his body. wherfor I wote wel sykerly that they be decey-ued that saye that they be not temp-ted in her sede sprynging. As well may a chorle be sayud as the lorde the same dethe by the chorle takyth the lorde takyth. wherfore I re de doo ryght so by thy chorle. As thou woldest they lord dyd wyth the yf thou were in his plyght. Euery synful man is chorle to syn-ne I rede she certes thou lord by thou rewle the in suche wyse that the chor les rather loue the thenne hate the. I wote wel there is degre aboue de-gre as reson is and skylle is by men doo her deuoyer there as it due But certes extorcions & despyte of youre bnderlynges is dampnable. And furthermor bnderstonde well that cõquerours or tirantis make wel ofte thralls of them that ben borne of as ryall blood as they that them conquerryn. This name of thraldom was neuer knowen erst tyl that Noe sayd. his sone canaan shold be thral to his brethern for his synne. what saye we thenne of them that pylle and do extorcions to holy chirche. Certes the swerde that men yeuen first to a knyght whan he is newe dubbyd signefyeth that he shold defende holy chyrche and not robb them. And who soo doth is a traytour to Cryste as sayth Saynt Austyn. Tho ben the deuelys wolrys that strangelyn the sheep of Jhesu Cryste and doon worse than wolues: For soth whan the wolf hath ful his wombe he stenteth to strangle sheep.

But sothly the pyllours and dis-troyers of goodes of holy chyrche do not so. For thye synne neuer to pylle. Now haue I said syn soo is that synne was fyrst cause of thraldom and subiection.

But certes syth the tyme of grace cam. God ordeyned that som solde shold be made more in hygh degre. & som falle more lowe estate and hy-gher. And that euerich shold be serued in hys estate and his degree. And therfor in som contres there as they ben thralls. when they haue torned hem to the feith they make her

thralls fre out of thraldom. And therfor certes the lord owyth to hys man. that the man oweth to the lord The pope clepyth hym self seruaunt of seruauntes of god But for as moche as the state of holy chyrche myght not be kept in reste ne in pees in erthe. But yf god had ordeyned þ som men haue hyer degre And som men lower. Therfore was soue rayne ordeyned to kepe and mayn tene and defende her vndertynges or her subiectes in reson as fer forth as it lyeth in her power. And not to des troye hem ne confounde. wherfor I saye thylke lordes ben wolues that deuouren the possessyons or the catel of other folke wrongfully wythout mercy or mesure. They shul be rele uyd by the same mesure that they ha ue mesured to poure folk for the mer cy of Jhesu Cryste but they it amen de. Now shul ye vnderstonde in what maner synne weyeth and en cresyth in man. The first thyng is þ norysshing of syn of which I spak byfore that is concupyscence.. And after that cometh subiectyon of the deuyl that is to saye the deuylls be lowe. wyth which he blowyth in mā the fyre of concupyscence. And after that a man be thynketh hym whether he wold doo or no that thin ge to whiche he is tempted And than yf that a man wythstonde and wey ue the first tysyng of his flesshe and of the fende. than it is no synne. And yf so be he do not than feleth he anon a flame of delyte. And than it is good to bewaar to kepe hym well or ellys he wyl falle anon in to con sentyng of synne. And than wyl he do it yf he may haue tyme & spa ce: And of this mater sayth Moyses by the deuyl in this maner. The fen de sayth I wyl chache and pursiewe the mā by wyckyd subgestyon. and I wyl honte hym by meuyng or ster yng of synne. And I wyl departe my pryse or my pray by delyberacō And my lyst shal be accomplyssshed in delyte. I wyl drawe my swerde in consentyng. For certes right as a swerde departeth one in two perys. Right so consentyng departeth god from man. And thenne wyl I slee hym wyth my honde in deth off synne. Thus sayth the fende. For cer tes thenne is a man al dede in soule. And thus is synne complyssshed by temptacion. by delyte and by consen tyng. And thenne synne is clepyd a meruaylle. For soth synne is in two maners. either it is venyal or de delyl synne. Sothly whan a man lo ueth ony creature more than Jhesu Cryste our creatour thenne it is dede ly synne. And venyal synne yf a man loue Jhesu cryst lesse than hym ought. For sothe the dede of this ven ial synne is ful perylous for it ame nuysith the loue that men shold haue to good more. And therfor yf a man charge more hym self wyth many su che venyal synnes certis but if so be that he discharge of them by shrift.

they may well lyghtly amenuse in hym al the loue that he hath to Jhesu cryste. And in this wyse slyppeth venyal synne in to the dedely synne For certes the more that a man charg eth his sowle wyth venyal synnes the more is he inclyned to dedely synne. & therfore leet vs not be necligent in dischargyng vs of venyal synne. For the prouerbe sayth many smale maketh a grete. And herkene this ensample A grete wawe of the see cometh somtyme wyth a grete a vyo lence that it drenchyth the shyp. And the same harme doo somtyme the smale dropes of water. That entre thurgh a lytyl creuys in the thurrok and in the botom of the shyp yf men be so neglygent ỹ they dyscharge hem not by tyme. And therfore al though there be difference betwene thyse two causes of drenchyng yet al gates the shyp is dreynt. ryght so fareth it somtyme of dedely synne & of anoyous venyal synnes whan they multeplye in man so gretely that the worldly thynges ỹ he loueth thurgh whiche he synneth venyalȳ is as grete in his herte as the loue of god or more. And therfore the loue of euery thyng that is not beset ne don principally for goddes sake. Al though a man loueth lasse than god. yet is it venyal synne. And dedely synne is whā the loue of ony thyng weyeth in the herte of man as moche as the loue of god or more. Dedely synne as sayth saynt Augustyn is whan a man tourneth his herte from god whā che that is verry souerayn bounte ỹ may not be chaunged. And yeueth his herte to a thyng that may chaunge and flytte. And certes that is euery thyng saue god of heuen. For soth yf that a man yeue his loue whiche he oweth to god wyth al his herte vn to a creature certes so moche of loue as he yeueth to suche a creature. so moche berreueth he hym fro god. And therfore doth he synne. for he that is dettour to god ne yeldeth not alle his dette to god that is to saye alle the loue of his herte. Now syth a man vnderstondeth generally whiche is ve nyall synne Than is it conuenable to telle specyally of synnes whiche that many a man peraventure demyth hem not synnys and shryueth them not of the same synnes. And yet neuertheles they be synnes. And soth ly as clerkes wryten this is to saye ỹ euery tyme that a man eteth & drynketh more than suffyseth to sustenaunce of his body certeyn he dothȳ synne. Eke whan he harkeneth not the complaynt of the poure men. Eke whan he speketh more than it nedeth it is synne Eke whan he is in helthe of body & wyl not faste whan other men faste wythout cause resonable. Eke whan he slepeth more than nedeth. or whan he cometh by ỹ enchoson to late to churche or to other werkes of charyte Eke whan he vseth his wyf wythouten desyre soue rayn of engendrure to thentent eff

god or for thentēt to yelde his wyf the dette of his body. Eke whan he wyl not byswke the syke or the prysoners whan he may. Eke yf he loue wyf or childe or ony other worldly thyng more than reson requireth. Eke yf he flatere or blaundyse more than hym ought for ony necessyte. Eke yf he amenuse or withdrawe the almes of the poure. Eke yf he apparayle hys mete more delycyously than nede is or ete it to hastely by lycherousnes. Eke yf he take vanytees in the chirche or at goddes seruyse or that he be a talker of ydle wordes of foly or of vylonye. For he shal yelde acountes of it at the day of dome. Eke whan he beholdeth or assureth to doo thynges that he may not performe. Eke whan be lyghtnes of folye mysseyeth or scornyth his neyghbour. Eke whan he hath ony wycked suspecion of thynh there be woot of hit no sothfastnes. These thynges and moo wythouten nombre be synnes as sayth saynt Austyn. Now shal ye vndestonde that al be it soo that none erthly man may eschewe al venyal synnes. yet may he refrene hym by the brennyng loue that he hath to our lord Jhesu cryste. And by prayers and confession and other goode werkes so that it shal but lytyl greue. For as sayth saynt Augustyn yf a man loue god in suche maner þ al that euer he doth is in the loue of god or for the loue of god. lo lo how myghty that a drope of water that fallyth in a furneys ful of fyre annoyeth or greueth so myghty anoyeth a venyal synne vnto a man that is perfyght in the loue of Jhū crist

Men may also refreyne venyalle synne by the receyuyng of the precious body of Jhesu Cryste. by receyuyng eke of holy water. by almes dede. by generall confessyon of confyteor at masse and at prime and complyne. And by blyssynge of bysshoppys and of preestes. And by other good werkes.

De septem peccatis mortalibus. Incipit de superbia.

Now it is behouely thynge to tell yn whiche ben dedely synnes. that is to saye captif of synnes. Alle they renne in to colis but in dyuerce maner. Now be the cleped captifs for as moche as they be chyef and springyng of alle other synnes Of the rote of thyse. vii synnys is pryde the general rote of al harmys for of this rote sprungen certeyn braunches. as Ire. enuye. accidye. or slouh. auarice. or couetyse to comyn vnderstondyng. glotonye and lecherye. And eueriche of thyse synnes hath his braunches and hys twygges as shalle be declared in her chapytres folowyng. and though so be that man knowyth not vtterly tho nombre of the twygges and of the harmys that comen of pryde. yet wyl I shewe a partye of them as ye

shal vnderstonde. ther is inobedience auaunting. ypocrysye despyte. arrogancye. Imprudence: smellyng of herte. Insolence. Elacyon. pertynacye. Veyn glorye. And other thyggis that I can not declare. Inobedyent is he that dysobeyeth for despyte to the commaundement of god and to his soueraynes & to his gostly fader. Auaūtour is he that auaunteth hym of the harme or of the bounte þ he hath don. Ypocrysye is he that hydeth to shewe hym suche as he is. And shewed hym to the peple to seme suche as he is not. Dysspytous is he that hath disdaign of his neyghbour that is to saye of his euen cristen & hath dysspyte to doo that hym ought to do. Arrogaunt is he that thynketh that he hath that bounte in hym that he hath not. or weneth that he sholde haue it by his deserte. or ellys that he demeth that he be that he is not. Imprudent is he that for his pryde hath no shame for his synne. Swellynge of herte is whan a man reioyseth hym of harm that he hath don. Insolent is he that dysspyseth in his Jugement alle other folke as to the regart of his valewe and of his conynge & of his spekyng and of his berynge. Elate is he whan he may nether suffre to haue mayster ne felowe. Impacient is he that wyl not be taught ne vndernome of his vyces and by shryft wartryth ayenst trouth wetyngly and defendeth his foly. Contumacy is he þ thrugh his Indignacyon is ayenst euery auctorite or power of them that ben his soueraynes Presumpsion is whan a man taketh an empryse that hym ought not to doo. or ellys he may it not doo. And that is callyd surquydry. Irreuerence is whan a man doth not honoure there as hym ought to doo and wyl teth to be reuerenced. Pertynacy is whan a man defendeth his foly and trusteth to myche to his owen witte

Veyn glorye is for to haue pompe and delyte in temporel hygnes and glorifye hym in worldy estates. Janglyng is whan a man spekyth to myche to fore folke & clappeth as a mylle and taketh no kepe what he sayth. And there is yet a prety spyce of pryde that wayteth first to be salewed or he salewe. all be he lesse worthy than that other it perauēture and elles he wayteth to sytte or to go aboue hym in the weye or kysse pay or be sensyd or goo to offryng before his neyghbour & suche a prude desyre to be magnefyed & honoured before the peple. Now ben ther two maners of pryde that one of them is wythin the herte of a man. And that other is without. Of whiche forsaid thinges and moo than I haue sayde appertaynen to the pryde þ is wythin the herte of man. And there be also other spyces of pryde þ be without. But neuertheles one of thyse spyces of pryde is sygne of that other right as the gay lesyl of tauernes is signe of the wyn that is in the selet. And this is in many thynges as in spethe in contenaunce in outrageousnes.

of euery of clothing Cryst wolde not so sone haue noted a spoken of the clothyng of that riche man in the gospel but yf it had be synne. For as sayth sayn̄t Gregorie. Precyous clothyng is culpable for the derthe of it and for his straungenes. for his dysguysynges and for the superfluyte or for the Inordynate scantnes. And to the fyrst synne that is in superfluyte of clothyng. whiche that maketh it so dere to harm of the peple that only the coste of the embrowdyng. The dysgysyng endentyng. or barrynge. oundyng. palyng and semblable wyse of clothyng in vanyte. There is also costlew furryng in gownes. And also myckyl pounsyng of cheseli to make hoolys so myckyl daggyng of sheris wyth the superfluyte in lengthe of the forsaid gownys traylyng in the dung and in the myre on hors and eke on foot as wel of man as of woman. that al that treylyng is verily as in effect wasted. consumed tredbare and roten wyth dung rather than it is yeuen to the poure. to grete domage of the forsayd poure folke and that in sondry wyse. thys is to sayn the more that cloth is waste the more must it coste for the scarsenes. And furthermore yf they wolde yeue suche pounsyd and daggyd clothis to the poure folke. It is not conuenyent to were for her estate ne sufficyent to her necessyte. On that other syde for to speke of the dishonest scantnes of clotyng as ben thyse cutted sloppis or hāselines þ thrugh her shortnes couer not the shamefull membres of a man to wycked entente. Alas somme of them shewe in the shap and the boos of the horrible swollen membrys that semen like to the maladye of hyrma in the wrappyng of her hosyn and eke the buttokkys of hem behynd that faren as is were the hynderparte as a sheape in the ful of the mone. And more ouer the wretchyd swellyng membrys that they shewe in dysgysyng in departyng of her hosyn whit and rede semeth that half the preuy membrys weren fleyn. And so by þ they departe their hosen in other colours as is whyte and blak or whyte

Adn blewe or blacke and reed and so forth. Than semeth it as by varyaunce of colour that half the parte of his preuy membrys ben corrupt by the fyre of sayn̄t Antonye. or by Cancer. or by other suche myschaunces. yet of the hynderparte off her buttokkys it is wel horrible for to see For certes in that partye of her body there as they purgen her fyrnsykyng ordure. that full party shewe they proudly to the people in despyte of honestie. whiche honestie that Jhesu Crist and his frendes obserued to shewe in his lyf. Now as to outerageous arap of woman. god woote though the vysage of hem seme ful chast & debonayr. yet notoftyen they in theyr arape of a tyre. lycherousnes and pryde. I saye not þ honestie in clotyng of man and woman is vncouenable

But certes the superfluyte or dysordi
nat straricte of cloting is reprouable
Also the synne of ornement or ap
parayl as in thynges that apperteyn
ne to ryding. as in many delycat
horses that be holden for delyte by
cause they be so fayr fat and costeye
we. and also many vicious knaue
mayntened by cause of them. And in
curyous harneys as in sadles. cro
pers. peytrellys. and brydles cou
ryd wyth precious clouth and riche
barres and plates of gelde and syl
uer. For whiche god sayth by zaka
rye the prophete. I wyl confounde the
ryders on suche horsis These folke
taken litel regarde of ryding of god
des son: and his harneys whan he
rood vpon an asse and had none o
ther harneys but the clothis of poure
disciples. Ne we rede not that he rode
euer on ony other beste. I spek thus
that of superfluyte. not for the hones
te whan reson it requyreth. And set
ther ouer certes pryde is gretely noty
fyed in holdyng of grete meyne whā
they be of lytyl prouffyt. And name
ly whan the meyne is felonous and
domageous to the peple by hardy
nes of her lordshyp or by wey of of
fyce For certes suche lordys sellen her
lordshippes to the deuyl of helle. whā
they susteyne the wyckednes of her
meyne or elys whan these folke off
lowe degre as they that holdē hostel
ryes susteyn theft by their hostelers
that is in many maners of disceytes
suche maner of folke ben the slyes
folowers the hony. Right so the lou
des that folowen the cateyn whiche
forsayd folke stranglen spyrituelly
her lordshyp. For whiche dauyd sayth
wyckednes moot come on the lord
shippis. And god gyue that they mo
we descende down in to helle. For in
her houses is myquyte and shrewd
nes and not god of heuen. And cer
tes yf thou doo no mendemēt right
as god pas his blyssyng to laban by
cause of Jacob and to Pharao for
the seruyce of Joseph. Right so wyll
god reue his malison to suche lordes
that susteyne the wyckednes of her
seruauntes. But the comyn pryde of
the table apperyth ekke fu ofte. For
certes riche men be clypyd to festys
poure folk be put awey and rebu
ted. And there is exces of dyuerse
metes and dryn kes and namely off
curyous manere of bakemetis and
of semblable wast so that it is abu
sion for to thynke: And eke in grete
preciousnes of vessel and curiosite of
mynystralcye by the whiche a man
is styred more to the delytes of luxu
rye. yf so be that he sette his herte the
lesse vpon our lord Jhesu Cryst cer
teyn it is a synne. And certes the delyc
cate metys the delyte myght be soo
grete in the eaas þ men myght the
lyghtlyer falle on hem in to dedely
synne. The spyces þ sourden of pry
de Sothly is whan they sourden off
malyce ymagyned and auysed and
forn cast or elys of vsage. ben dedely
synnes it is no doubte. whā they

sourden by frelte vnaupsed sodeynly. & sodeynly wythdrawe agayn. al be they greuous synnes. I gesse & suppose they be not dedely. Now mygh̄t men aye wherof that pryde sourdeth & sprygneth. And I say þ somtyme it sprygneth of goodes of nature. & somtyme of the goodes of fortune & sōtyme of the goodes of grace. certes the goodes of nature stōden in the goodes of body or of soule. certes the goodes of the body. be hele of body streth delyuernes. beaute. gentrye & fraunchyse. The goodes of nature of the soule ben good witte sharpe vnderstondyng. subtil engenye. vertu naturel good memorye. Goodes of fortune ben ryches. hygh degres of lordshippis & preysynges of the peopse. Goodnes of grace ben sevence. power to suffre spirituel trauayle. bedyngnytees. vertuous contemplacion wythstondyng of temptacion & semblable thynges. Of whiche forsayde goodes certes it is a grete folye a mā to pryden hym in ony of them alle: Now as for to speke of goodes off nature god woote that somtyme we haue hem in nature as moche to our domage as to our profyt. As for to speke of hele of body certes it passyth ful lyghtly. And eke it is ful ofte thenchoson of the seknes of the soule for god woot the flesh is a ful grete enemye to the soule. And therfor the more that a body is hool. the more be we in peryl to falle. Eke for to pryde hym in his strengthe off body it is a grete folye. For certes the flesh coueyteth ayenst the spyrite. And euer the more stroger the flesshe is. the soryer may the soule be. And ouer al this strength of the body & worldly hardynes causeth ful ofte many men to perysse and mynchaūce. Eke for to pryde hym of his gentrye. it is ful grete folye. For ofte tyme the gentrye of the body begynneth of the gentrye of the soule. And eke we be alle of one fader and of one moder. And al we ben of one nature rotyn and corrupt both riche & poure. For soth a manere gentrye is for to pryse þ apparayleth mannes corage wyth vertues or moralytees and maketh hym a crysten chylde. For trusteth wel that what mā that synne ouer maystryde is very chorll to synne. Now ben there thre general thynges of gentylnes as esche wyng of vyces or rybaudrye. And seruage of synne in worde & werke in contenaūce & vsyng vertu as curteyse clennesse & to be lyberalle that is to saye large by mesure. For that that passyth mesure is folye and synne Another is that he remembre hym of the bounte that he of other folke hath receyued. Another is to benygne ouer his subgette. Wherfore as sayth Seneke. There is nothyng more couenable to may of hygh estate than debonayrte. & these flesshly men clepen bees whan they make her kyng. they chesen one that hath non pryckē wherwyth he may stynge. Another is a man to haue a noble herte and a dylygent tatteyn to

hye vertuous thynges. Certes also who that pryde∫th in the goodes off fortune he is ful lyke a greet fole. For ſomtyme a man is a full grete man by the morowe that is a wretche or a caytif or it be nyght. ¶ ſomtyme delyte∫ oe man by cauſe of greuous maladye thorugh whiche he dep∫eth Certes the commendacyon of the peple is ſomtyme ful falſe ¶ full vnpryſe for to truſt This day they prey∫e. to morowe they blame. god woot Ek̄e deſyre to haue commendacion of the peple hath cauſyth deth to many a man. Now certes a man to pryde hym in the goodes of grace is ek̄e an outrageous folye for the yeftes of grace that ſhold haue tourned hym to goodnes ¶ to medecyne tournyth to venym and to confuſion. as ſayth ſaynt gregoire. Now ſyth that ſo is that ye haue vnderſtonde what is pryde and whiche be the ſpeces of it And how manys pryde ſourdeth and ſpryngyth Now ſhal ye vnderſtonde which is the remedye againſt pryde. And that is humylyte or meknes That is a vertu thrugh which man hath very knowleche of hym ſelf and holdeth of hym ſelf no deynte ne no pryce as in regarde of his deſertes conſyderyng euer his freelte. Now ben there thre maners of humilyte. as humylyte in herte. and another in the mouth. And the thyrde in werkys. The humylyte in herte is in foure maners that is whan a man holdeth hym ſelf as nought worth byfore god of heuen. Another is whan he deſpyſeth non other man.

The thirde is. that he reckyth not though men holdeh̄ym nought The fourth is whan he is not ſory of his humylyacion. Alſo the humylyacion of mouth is in four thynges In attēperat ſpeche ¶ whā he knoweth with his owen mouth̄ that he is ſuche as he thinke th̄t he is in his herte. Another whan he preyſeth the debonayrte of another man And alſo nothing therof amenuſith. Humylyte ek̄e in werkys is in four maners The firſt is whan he put men before hym. The ſecond is to cheſe the loweſt place. The thyrde is gladly to aſſente to good counceyl. The fourth is gladly to ſtonde in obedyence of his ſouerayn or of hym that is hygher in degre. Certes that is a grete vertue off humylyte.

Sequitur de Inuidia

After pryde wyl I ſpeke off
a the foule ſynne of enuye.

Whyche that is as by the worde of the philoſophre ſorowe off other mennys prouſyte. And after the worde of ſaynt Auguſtyn it is ſorowe of other mennys wele and Joye of other mennys harm. This foule ſynne is platly ayenſt the holy ghooſt. Al be it ſo that euery ſynne is ayenſt the holy ghooſt. yet for as moche as bounte appertayneth to the holy ghooſte properly. And enuye cometh properly of malyce Therfore it is properly ayenſte the

bounte of the holy ghoost.
Now hath malyce two spyces that is to saye hardynes of herte and wyc kednes. or elles the flesshe of man is so blynde þ he cõsyderyth not þ he is in synne. Whiche is the hardynes off the deuyl That other spyce of envye is whan a man warryth ayenst trouth whan that he woote that it is trouth. And ȝe whan he warryth the grace that god hath yeue to hys neyghbour. And al this is envye Certes than is envye the werst synne that is. For sothly al other synnes be somtyme ayenst one spycal vertue but certes envy is ayenst all maner vertues and al goodnes For it is sory of al bounte of his neyghbours.

And in this maner it is diuerse from al synnes For vnethe is there ony synne that it ne hath somme delyte in hym saueonly envye that euer hath in hym self angwysshe and sorowe. The spyces of envye ben thyse There is first sorowe of other mennys goodnes. And of her prosperyte ought to be kyndly mater off sorowe There ne is envye a synne ayenst kynde The seconde spyce of envye is Joye of other mennys harme. Of this seconde spyce cometh backbyting or detraction that hath two spites as thus Som men preyse her neyghbour by wycked entente. For he maketh alway a wycked knotte at the last ende alway he maketh a but that is signe of more blame thã worth is al the preysyng. The seconde spyce is that a man be good and do and saye a thyng to good entente. The backbyter wyl torne al the goodnes vp soo doun to his shrewde entente. The third is to amenuse the bounte of his neyghbour. The four the spyce of backbityng is this that if men speke goodnes of a man the backbyter wyl saye. perfay yet is suche a man better than he in dyspreysynge of hym that men prayse. The fyfthe is to consente gladly to herkne the harme that men speken of other folke. This synne is ful grete and by encreseth after the wycked entente of the backbyter. After backbityng cometh grutchyng or murmuraunce And somtyme it sprongeth of Impacyence ayenst god and somtyme ayenste man. Ayenst god is whan a man grutchyth agaynst the peyne of helle or ayenst poucrte or losse of catel or ayenst rayn or tempest. or elles grutchet that shrewes haue prosperyte. or elles that gode men haue aduersyte

And alle thyse thynges shold men suffre pacientlyy. For they comen by the rightful Jugement and ordynaũce of god Somme tyme cometh grutchyng of auarice as Judas grutchyd ayenst Magdalene whan she anoynted the hede of our lorde Jhesu Cryst wyth her precyous oynement This maner of murmur is suche as whan men grutchen of goodnes. off that men hem self doon. or that other folke doon of her owen catel: Somtyme cometh murmur of pryde as whan Symon the Pharysee grutchyd ayenst Magdalene whan she approchyd to Jhesu Cryste.

And wept at hys feet for her synnes
And somtyme it sourdeth of enuye whan men dyscouereth a mannys harm that was pryue or beryth hym on honde thyng that is fals.
Murmur is eke ofte amonge seruauntes whan her souerayns bydden hem doo sorful thynges.
And for as moche as they dar not openly wythsaye the commaundement of her mayster. yet wyl they saye harme and grutche and murmure pryuely for very despyte. Whyche wordes men clepe the deuyls Pater noster. Though so be the deuyl had neuer Pater noster.
But that folke yeue suche a name. somtyme it comyth of Ire or of pryue hate that norysshyth rancoure in herte as after I shal declare.
Thenne cometh eke bytternes of herte Thrugh whyche bytternesse euery good dede of hys neyghbour semeth to hym bytter and vnsauory.
Than comyth dyscorde that vnbyndeth alle maner of frendshyp.
Thenne comyth scornyng of hys neyghbour al doo he neuer so well. thenne comyth accusyng as whan men seken occasyon to anoye hys neyghbour. whiche that is lyke the craft of the deuyl that wayth bothe nyght and day to accuse vs alle.
Thenne cometh malygnyte thrugh whyche a man noyeth hys neyghbour pryuyly yf he may.
And yf he nought may algate his wycked wyl shal not wante as for to brenne hys hous pryuely or empoysen hym or slee hys beestys and semblable thynges.
Now wyll I speke of the remedye of thys foulle synne of enuye.
And the first is the loue of god principally and louynge of hym self and of hys neyghbour.
For sothly that one may not be with out that other. And crist wyll in the name of thy neyghbour þ thou shalt vnderstonde thy broder. For certes al we haue one fader flesshly and one moder that is to saye Adam and Eue. And eke one fader spyrytuel. that is to saye god of heuen.
Thy neyghbour art thow holde for to loue and wyl hym alle goodnes. And therfore sayth god. loue thy neyghbour as thy self that is to say to lyf and to soule and saluacion.
And more ouer thou shalt loue hym in worde and benygne chere and monyssshyng and chastysyng in a wyse to comforte hym and praye for hym wyth alle thy herte. And in dede thou shalt loue hym in suche wyse þ thou shalt do to hym in charyte as thou woldest were don to thyn owē persone And therfore thou shalt doo to hym no domage in wycked worde ne harme in his body ne in his catel ne in his soule by entysyng of wycked ensample. Thou shalt not desyre his wyf ne none of his thynges. Vnderstonde eke that in the name of thy neyghbour is comprehendyd his enemye. certes a mā shal loue his enemye for the cōmaundement of god. & sothly thy frēde shal thou loue i god

I saye the enemye shalle thou loue
e for goddys sake by his commaun-
dement. For it were reson a man
shold hate his enemye. For soth god
wyl not receyue vs to his loue that
ben his enemyes Ayenst thre maner
wronges that his enmye doth to him
he shal doo thre thynges as thus. a-
yenst hate and rancoure of herte he
shal loue hym in herte. ayenst chy-
dyng and wycked wordes he shall
praye for his enemye. Ayenst the wic
ked dede of his enemye he shall doo
hym bounte. For cryste sayth loueth
youre enemyes & prayeth for hem þ
speryth you harme & eke for them þ
yow chasen and pursuen & dooboun
te to hem that you haten.

Lo thus commaunded vs our lord
Jehsu Cryste to do to oure enemyes
for soth nature dryueth vs to loue ou
re frendes. And persey oure enemyes
haue more nede to loue than our fren
des And they that more nede haue
Certes to hem shal we doo goodnes.
and certes in that dede haue remem-
braunce of the loue of Jhesu Cryste
that deyde for his enemyes. And for
as moche as that loue is the more gre
uous to perfourme. so moche is mo-
re grete the meryte. And therfore the
louyng of our enemye hath confon-
ded the venym of the deuyl. For
ryght as the deuyl is confyted by hu
mylyte. Right so is he wounded to
the deth by the loue of our enemye.
Certes than is loue medycine that
chaseth out the venym of enuye fro
mannys herte.

Sequitur de Ira

After enuye wyl I declare of the synne of Ire.

a For soth he that hath enuye vpon his neygh
bour: Anon comynly wyl sturre him
mater of wrath in worde or in dede.
Ayenst hym to whom he hath enuye
for sothly he that is proud or enuy-
ous is lyghtly wroth. This synne of
Ire after dyscryuyng of saynt Au-
gustyn is wycked wyll to be auen-
ged by worde or by dede.

Ire after the Phylosophre is the fer-
uent bloode of man y quycken in
his herte. thrugh whiche he wyl har-
me to hym that he hateth.

For certes the herte of a man by en-
chafyng and meuyng of his bloode
weyxth so troubled: that he is out of al
Jugement of resons. But ye
shul vnderstonde that Ire is in two
maners. Ony of them is goode and
that other is wycked.

The good Ire is by Jelousye of god
nes thrugh the whiche a man is wro
the with wyckednes and agayn wic
kednes. And therfore sayth the
wyse man that yre is better than pla
ye. this Ire is wyth debonayrte and
it is wrath wythout bytternes not
wroth agaynst the man. but wroth
with the mysdede of the mā as sayth
the yphete. Iraseimini et nolite pec-
care. Now vnderstōde þ wycked yre
is in two maners þ is to say sodeyn
yre or hasty yre wythout auysement

and consentyng of hys reson. The meuyng and the sense of this is that reson of a man ne consentith not to that sodeyn yre. And than it is veny al Another yre is that is ful wycked that cometh of felonye of herte auysed & cast byfore wyth wycked wyl to doo vengeaunce. & therto his reson consentyth & sothly this is dedely synne. This yre is so displeysaunt to god that it troublyth his hous and chasith the holy goost out of mannys soule and put in hym the sergenes of the deuyl and benymeth the man fro god that is his rightful lord This yre is a ful grete plesaunce to the deuyl for it is the deuilles furneys that he enchaunsith with the fyre of helle. For certis as fyre is more myghtye. to distroye erthly thynges than a nother element. Right so ire is myghty to distroye alle spiritualle thynges. Loke how that fyre of smale gledes yf be almoost dede vndre asshen wyl quyeken ayen whan they be touchid with brymstone. right so yre wol eurmore quyeken ayen whan it is to chyd with pryde yf is couerid in mannys herte. For certis pryde may nat come out of no thyng but if it were first in the same thing naturally. as fyre is drawyn out of flyntes with steel right so is pryde a mater of yre. right as rancour is norisshet & kepar therof There is a maner tree as sayth sayn Isodore. That whan men make fire of that tre and couer the colys of hit wyth asshen. Sothly the fyre therof wol lasie al a yere or more. And ryght so fareth it by rancour. whan he is ones conceyued in the hertes of somme men. Certes it wyl lasie peraventure from one eister day tyl on other or more. But certes yf man is ful ferre from the mercy of god al that whyle. In this forsayde deuelys forneys they forgen thre shrewys. Pryde than blowith and encresyth the fyre by chydyng & wycked wordes. Thenne stondeth enuye and holdeth the pryon vpon the hertes of men. wyth a prayer of long tonges wyth longhe rancour. And thenne sprint the synne of contynuell stryf and chesst and beuth and forgyth the vylayns reprouynges. Certes this cursyd synne anoyeth both the man hym self and eke his neghbour. For sothly almoost al the harm that one man doth to his nyghbour cometh of wrath. For certes outrageous wrath doth al that euer the deuyl commaundeth hym For he spareth nether for Crist ne for his swete moder in his outrageous anger and yre but speketh and blaudryth his neyghbour this is a cursyd lyf wherche lyf shold be debonayr & spyrytuel that shold kepe his soule Certes this yre or wrath benymeth eke god dys due lordshyp & that is mannys sowle & the loue of his nyghbours. it stryuyth al way eke ayenst trouth it reueth hym the quyete of his herte and subuertith his sowle Of yre comen thyse synnyng engendrures. First hate yf is olde wrath reneWyd

thrugh whiche a man forsaketh his owen frend that he hath loued so long. & therme cometh werre & euery maner of wrong þ a man doth to his neyghbour in body or in catel.

Of this cursyd synne of Ire cometh eke manslaughter. And vnderstonde deth wel þ manslaughter is in dyuerse wyse. Somme maner of manslaughter is spirituel. And somme bodely Spyrituel manslaughter is in vi. thynges. First by hate as sayth seint Iohn he that hateth his broder is an homycyde. Manslaughter is eke by backbityng of whiche backbytour saith salamon that they haue two swerdys wyth whiche they sle her neyghbours. For sothly as wycked it is to benyme his good name as his lyff. Homycide is eke in reuyng of wycked counceyl by fraude. or for to reue counceyl for to areyse wrangfull customys and talagys of whiche speketh Salamon. Lyon roryng and bere hungry ben lyknid to cruel lorges In wythholdyng or abredgyng of the hyre or wagys of poure folke For whiche the wyse man sayth fede ye hym that almost dyeth for hungre. For sothly but yf thou fede hym thou sleest hym. And al thyse ben dedely synnes. Bodely manslaughter is whan thou sleest hym wyth thy tunge. Another maner is whan thou commaundest to sle a man or elles reuest hym counceyl to slee a man Manslaughter in dede is in four maners. That one is by lawe. ryght as a Iustice damped hym that is culpable to the deth. but lete the Iustice beware that he do it rightfully and þ he doo it not for delyte to spylle blood but for kepyng of rightwysnes. Another homycyde is don for necessite as whan a má sleeth another his defendaunt and that he ne may otherwyse ascape fro his owen deth. But certeyn and he may escape wythout slaughter of his aduersarye & sleeth hym he doth synne. And he shal bere penaunce as for dedely synne. Eke yf a man by caas or aucnture shete an arowe or cast a stoon wyth whiche he sleeth a man it is homycyde.

Eke yf a woman by neclygence ouerlyeth her chylde in slepyng It is homycyde and dedely synne. Eke whan a man destroyeth conception of a chylde or maketh a woman bareyn by drynkes of venymous herbes thrugh whiche she may not conceyue. Or sleeth her chylde by drynkes. or elles putteth certeyn materyal thyng in her secrete place to sle her chylde Or elles doth vnkynde synne by whiche man or woman shedyth his nature in place there as a chylde may not be conceyued. Or elles yf a woman haue conceyued & hurte her self & sleeth her chyld. yet is it homycyde what saye we eke of women þ murdren her chyldren for drede of wordely shame. Certes it is eke an horrible homycyde. Eke yf a man aproche to a woman by desyre of lecherye thrugh whyche the chylde is perysshed elles smyteth a

woman wekyngly by which her chil
de is slayn Alle thyse ben homycides
and dedely horrybly synnes. yet co-
myn of yre many moo synnes as in
worde in thought in dede as wel as
he that aretteth vpon god or blaspe-
myth god of whiche he is hym self
gylty or dyspyseth god and alle his
halowes as don thyse cursyd hasour
dours in dyuerse contrees. This cur
syd synne do they whan they feylen
in her herte ful wyckedly of god &
hys halowes Also whan they treten
vnworthely the sacrament of the a-
wter Thylke synne is so grete. that
vnnethe may it be releed but ꝑ the
mercy of god passyth his werkyn-
whiche mercy is grete and benygne.
There cometh also of yre a ter-y an-
ger whan a man is sharply amones
shed in his shrift to forlete hys synne
Than wyl he be angry and answe-
re outrely & angerly to defende or-y
cusyn his synne. by vnstedfastines of
his flesshe. or elles he dyd it for to hol-
de company wyth his felawes. or el-
lis he sayth. the fende entysed hym or
elles he dyd it for his pouyth or elles
his complexyon is so corragyous ꝑ
he may not forbere. elles it is desty-
ne as he sayth vnto a certeyn age. or
elles he sayth it comyth hym of gyn
tylnes of his auncetres & semblable
thynges Al thyse maner of folke so
wrappyn them in hyr synnes ꝑ they
wyl not delyuer hem self. For sothly
no wyght that excusyth hym wilful
ly of his synne. may be delyuerd off
his synne tyl he meekely be knowyn

his synne After thenne comyth swe-
ryng that is expres ayenst the com-
maundement of god & this be fallyth
of anger & of yre. God saith thou
shalt not take the name of thy lorde
in ydyl Also our lord Jhū cryst saith
by the worde of sayn̄t mathew. ne
wyl ye to swere in al maner. neyther
by heuen for it is goddys trone ney-
ther by erthe for it is the benche off
his feet: ne by iherusalem for it is the
cyte of a grete kynge. ne by thyn he-
de. for thou ne mayst make an heer
whyte ne blacke. but youre othe shal
be. ye. ye. nay. nay. And what that is
more cuyl. thus sayth cryst. For cris
tes sake swere ye not so synfully in
dismembryng of Cryst. by soule. her
te. bones. and body. For ye thynke ꝑ
the cursyd Jewes dismembryd hym
not ynough but ye dysmembre hym
more And yf so be that lawe compel
le you to swere thenne reule you af-
ter the lawe of god in your swerynge
As sayth sayn̄t Jherome the fourth
chappytre. Thou shalt kepe
thre condycions. Thou shalt swe
re in trouth. in dome & in rightwys-
nes. This is to saye thou shalt
swere soth. for euery lesyng is ayenst
Cryste. For Cryste is very trouth.
And thynke wel this that euery grete
swerer not compellyd lawfully to
swere. the plaghe of vengeaunce shal
le not parte from hys howe whyles
he vsyth suche vnlawful swerynge.
Thou shalt eke swere in dome whey
tho art cōpellyd by the domes mā to

wytnesse the trouthe. Lyke thou shalt not sweare for enuye. for fauour. for mede but for right wysnys for declarynge of trouth to the worshyp of god & to helpynge of thyn euen cristen. & therfor euery man that taketh godes name in vdle or falsly sweryth wyth his mouth. or elles taketh on hym the name of cryst to be callyd a cristen man and lyueth ayenst cristen lyuynge & his techynge. Al they take goddes name in vdle. Lo lyke ye what sayth saint peter actuum quarto. there is none other name vnder heuen geuen to man in whiche they moot be sauyd. That is to saye but in the name of Jhū cryst. Take kepe eke how that precious name of Jhū cryst as sayth sayne Poule at philippenses In nomine Jhū etc. That in the name of Jhū euery kne of heuenly creature or erthly or of helle shol lowen. For it is so high & so worshypful that the cursyd fende in helle shold tremble for to here hit named than semed it that men þ swere so horybly his blessyd name that they despyse it more boldly than dyd the cursid Jewes þ tremeleden whan they herde his name Now certes syth þ swerynge but it be doo al lawfully is so hooly defenden moche worse is for to swere falsely & eke nedeles. What saye we eke of them that delyten them in swerynge and holde it a gentrye or manly dede to swere grete othes. and what of them that of euery vsage necessite not to swere grete othes and al the cause not worthe a strawe. Certes this is horyble synne. Swerynge also wythout auysement is eke synne. But late vs goo now to that cursid and horyble swerynge of adiuracion and coniuracio as don thyse fals enchauntours and nygromancers in basyns ful of water Dryn a bryght swerde. In a circle or in a fyre. or in a sholdre boon of a sheep I can not saye but they do cursydly & dampnably ayenst cristie and alle the feith of holy chirche. What saye by them that belyeuen in dyn naylis as by slyght or by noyse of byrdys and of bestys or by sorte. by nygromancye. by dremes. By chyrchynge of dorys by gnawynge of rattys or crackynge of houses and suche maner of wretchydnes. Certes al this thyng is defended of god and eke holy chirche. for whiche they be cursyd tyl they come to amendement. þ on suche fylthe sette their beleue. Charmys for woundys & maladyes of men or of bestys. yf they take ony effect. it may peraventure þ god suffreth it. for men shold gyue the more feyth & reuerence to his name Now wyl I tyke of lesynges whiche generally is fals significacio of word wyth entent to deceyue his euen cristen Som lesyng there is of whiche cometh non auantage to no wyght. And som lesyng toucheth to the ese & prouffyt of a man & to domage of a nother man. Another lesyng for to saue his lyf or catel Another lesyng comyth of delyte. They wyl forge a longe tale and peynte it with

al circumstaūces wt, crof al the groū de is fals. Somme lesyng compth for he wyl sustepne his worde. And somme lesyng compth of recheliſnes wythouten auysement and sembla= ble thynges. Lete vs now touche the vyce of flaterye. whiche comth not gladly but for drede or for couey= tyse. Flatterye is generally wrang= ful prepsyng. Flateres ben the deuy lys norryces that norysſheth his chyl= dren wyth the mylke of losengery. For soth sayth salamon that flatery is worſe than detraction. For somty= me detraction maketh an haunteyn may be the more humble for he dre= deth detraction. But certeyn flatery maketh a man to enhaunce his herte and his contenaunce. Flateres ben the deuylles enchauntours for they maken a man to wenen hym self be lyke. that he is not lyke. They be lyk Judas that betrayed god. And thyſe flateres betraye a man to selle hym to this enmye that is the deuyl. Flate res ben the deuylles chappelaynes that syngen euer placebo. I retene flaterye in vyces of Ire. For ofte ty= me yf a man be wroth with another Thenne wyl we flatere somme wy= ght to sustepne hym in his quarelle.

Spekē we now of suche cursing as comyth out of prous hertes. Ma= lyson may be sayd generally euery maner power of harm. suche cur= syng bereueth a mā the regne of god. As sayth sayne Poule. And of suche cursyng wrongfully retorneth ayen to hym that cursyth. As a byrde retorneth agayn to his owen neste. And ouer alle thyng men ought ſes= chewe to curse her chyldren and to pe ue to the deuyl her engendrure as fer forth as in hem is. Certes it is a grete peryl and a grete synne. Lete vs then speke of chydyng and repre uyng whiche ben grete woundes in mannys herte. For certes vnnethe may a mā be playnly accorded with hym that he hath openly reuyled. re= proued and dyſclaundred this is a ful grisly synne. As Cryste sayth in the goſpel. And take ye kepe now that he þ reproueth his neyghboure by ſome harme or by somme peyn þ he hath in his body. as meſyl. croked harlote: or by somme sygne tha he doth. Now yf he repreueth hym by harm of peyne. thenne retorneth the repref to Jheſu Cryſte. For peyn is sent by the rightwys ſonde of god and by his ſuffraūce. be it meſchef or mayme or maladye.

And yf he repreue hym vncharyta= bly of synne. thou holour. thou dron kelewe harlot and soo forth thenne appertayned it to reioysyng of the de uyl that euer hath ioye that men doy synne. And certes chydyng may not come but of vnkeynous herte. For after haboundaunce of the herte spe keth the mouth ful ofte. And ye shul vnderſtonde whan ony man chaſty seth another þ he bewar fro chydyng or repreuyng. For trewly but he be waar he may ful lyghtly quykē the fyre of angre and of wrath whi= che that he shal not quenche.

And peraduenture sleeth hym that he myght chastyse wyth benygnyte.

For as sayth Salamon. The amyable tongue is the tre of lyf. that is to saye of lyf spyrituel. And a dis laue tongue sleth the spirites of hym that is reprcuyd. Lo what sayth saint Austyn There is no thing like the deuyllys chylde as he that oft chy deth. Sayut Poule sayth eke. I ser uaunt of god behoue not to chyde. And who that chydyng is a byleins thyng bet wyxt alle maner folke. yet yet is it cartes most vncouenable bet wyxt a man and his wyf. For there is neuer reste And therfor sayth Salamon. An hous that is vncouer yd in rayn and droppyng. and a chydyng wyf be lyke. a man that is in a droppyng hous in many places thought he eschewe the droppyng in one place it droppyth on hym in a nother place. So farytb it by a chydyng wyf but she chyde hym in one place she wyl chyde hym in ano ther place. And therfore better is a morsel breed wyth ioye. than a hous ful of delytes wyth chydyng. Lo what Salamon and saynt Poule sayn. Dye wommen be ye sub gettys to your husbondys os beho ueth in god. And ye men loue your wyuys. Afterward we spekc off scornyng whiche is a wycked syn ne and namely whan he scorneth a man by hys goode werkys. For cartes suche scornes farcn lyke the foule tode that may not endure to smelle the swete sauour of the wyne whan it florysshyth. These scorners ben partyng felowes wyth the deuyl for they haue Ioye whan the deuyll wynneth and sory whan he leyseth They ben aduersaryes to Jhesu cryst te. For they haten that he loueth that is to saye sauacion of sowle. Spekc we now of the wrekcd counceyl:

For he that wrekced counceylle pe ueth is a treytour. For he dysceyueth hym that trusteth in hym. But neuertheles yet is wrekced counceyll ayenst hym self. For as sayth the wyse man. Euery fals lyuyng hath his properte in hym self. For he that wyl anoye another man anoyeth first hym self. And men shal vn derstonde that a man shal not take his counceyl of falsc folke ne of an gry folk or greuous folk ne of folk blouen specyally her owen prouyst ne to moche worldly folke a name ly in counceyllyng of foolis.

Now compth the synne of them that makcn discorde among folk. whi che is a synne that Cryste hateth bc terly. And no wonder is. for he deyed for to make concorde. And more shame don they to cryst thā dyd they that hym crucifyed. For god loueth better that frenshyp be among folke than he dyd his owen body whiche he put for vnyte. Therfore be they ly keuyd to the deuyl that euer is abou te to make dyscorde. Now compth the synne of double tongue for suche as spekc fayr before men and wyc kedly behynde. or ellys they make

semblaunt as though they spoken of good entencion. or elles in game & pleye. And they speken of wycked entente Now compth the wreyynge of counceyl. thrugh whiche man is defamed Whethys may he restore the domage. Now compth manace that is an open folye. For he that openly manaceth he threteneth more thenne he may ouercome ful ofte tyme.
Now comen pole wordys þ be wyth out prouffyt of hym that speketh the wordes and eke of hym that herk-nyth the wordes. Or elles pole wor-des ben tho that ben ydeles or wyth oute entente of naturell prouffyt.
And al be it that pole wordes be som tyme venyal synne. yet shalle men doubte hem. For we shal yeue rek-nyng of hem before god. Now co-mpth Iangelyng that may not com wyth out synne as sayth Sa-lamon It is a sygne of apert folye
And therfore a philosophre sayde whan a man axed hym how men shold plese And he answeryd do ma ny good werkys & spek fewe Jan-gelynges. After this cometh the syn-ne of Japers that ben the deueyllys apys. For they make folke to longe at her Japerye as folke don at gwa des of an ape. Suche Japers defen-deth saynt Poule. Loke how that vertuous wordes and holy comfor-ten hem that traueyllen in the seruy-ce of Cryst. Ryght so comforten the vyleyns wordes and the knakys of Japers hem that traueylen in the seruyce of the deuyl. All thyse ben the synnes of the tonge that comyn off yre & of other synnes. The remedye ayenst yre is a vertu that cleped is manfuetude that is debonayrte. and eke another vertu that men clepen pacience. saynt Jherome sayth thus of debonayrte that it doth harme to no wyght ne sayth none harm that men hym doo ne seyn ne chaungeth not ayenst reson. This vertu cometh samtyme of nature. For as sayth the philosophre a man is a quyk thyng by nature debonayr and treta ble by goodnes. But whan debona-yrte is enformed of grace hit is the more worthy Pacyence is another remedye ayenst yre and is a vertu þ men suffre swetly euery mannes god nes. and is not wroth for none har-me that is don to hym The philoso-pher sayth that pacience is that ver-tu that suffreth debonayrly al the ou trage of aduersyte. and euery wyc-ked worde. This vertu maketh a man lyke to god & makyth hym his owen dere chylde. As sayth cryst this vertu dyscomfyteth thyn enemye.
And therfore saith the wyse man yf thou wolt venquysshe thyn enemye see that thou be patient. Suffraunce is another vertu ayenst Ire. And þ is whan he suffreth swetly alle anoy aunce & the wronges that men do a man outward. Thou shalt vnder-stonde that a man suffreth four ma-ner of grauāce in outward thinges Ayenst which four he must haue fou re maner of pacēce. the first grauāce is wicked wordes. þ grauāce suffrid

Jhesu crist wythout grutchyng wel pacyently whan the Jewes despyted hym & reproued hym ful ofte. Suffre thou therfore pacyently. For the wyse mā saith yf thou stryue with a fool if the fole be wroth or though he laugh. Algat thou shalt haue no rest ¶ other greuaūce outward is to haue domage of thy catel. There ayenst suffred crist ful pacyently whan he despoyled was of al ¶ euer he had in this lyf and that nas but clothes.

The third greuaunce is to a man to haue greuaunce in his body That suffred crist ful pacyently in alle his passyon. The fourth greuaunce is in outrageous labour in werkis wherfore I say that folk that maken her seruauntes to trauayle to greuously out of tyme as in holy dayes. Soth ly they doo grete synne. here ayenst suffryd Cryst ful pacyently & taught vs pacience whan he bare vpon his blessyd sholdres the crosse vpon whiche he shold syffre despytous deth. here may men lerne to be pacyent. For certes not only cristen men be pacient for the loue of Jhesu Cryst & for guerdon of the blisse of heuen and of the blessyd lyf that is perdurable.

But certes the olde payens that neuer were cristenyd comendyd and vsyd the vertu of pacience. A philosophre vpon a tyme that wold haue beten his disciple for his grete trespaas. For whiche he was gretely a meuyd and brought a yerde to scourge the chyld And whan the chyld: sawe the yerde he sayd to his mayst what wyl ye do I wyl bet the qd the master for thy correctiō for soth quod the chyld ye ought fyrst correcte your self that hath lost your pacyence for the gylt of a chylde: For soth said the mayster al wepyng thou seyst soth haue thou the yerde my dere sone & correct me for myn vnpacience. Of pacience comyth obedyence thrugh whiche a man is obedyent to crist & to alle them to whiche he ought too be obedient to cryst. And vnderstonde wel ¶ obedyence is parfyght whā men doo gladly and hastely wyth good herte entierly al that he sholde doo obedyence generally is to peesourme the doctryne of god and to his souerayns to whiche hym ought to be obeyssaunt in al rightwysnes.

Sequitur de Accidia

After the synne of wrath I a wyl speke of the synne of accidye or slouth. For enuye blyndeth the herte of man. And ire troubleth a mā And accidye maketh hym heuy thoughtful and wrawe. Enuye & ire maken bitternes in herte. whiche bitternes is moder of accidye and benymet him the loue of alle goodnes. thenne is accide the angre of a troble herte. And Saynt Austyn sayth It is anoye of goodnes and annoye of harme.

Certes this is a dampnable synne For it doth wronge to Jhesu Cryste in as moche as he benymeth the

ſcrupce that men ought to do to Ihe ſu Cryſte wyth al dyligence.
As ſayth Salamon. But accidye doth none ſuche dylygence. he doth alle wyth anuoye & wrawnes ſlaū nes. excuſacion dulneſſe and vnluſt

For whiche the booke ſayth accurſyd be he that doth the ſcrupſe of god neclygently. thenne is accidye enmye to euery eſtate of man For the eſtate of man is in thre maners. Eyther it is eſtate of Innocence as was the ſtate of Adam before or that he fyl in ſynne in whyche eſtate he was holde to worche as in heeryng and adouryng of god. Another eſtate is eſtate of ſuperfluyte. In whiche eſtate men beholden to laboure in prayeng to god for amendement of her ſynnes. Another eſtate is in the eſtate of grace. In whiche eſtate is he holden to doo werkys of penytence And certes to alle thyſe thynges is accidye enemye and contrary for he loueth no beſynes at alle. Now certes this foule ſynne of accydye is eke a ful grete enemye to the lyuelod of the body. For it hath no purueaunce ayenſt temporel neceſſyte. For it is ſlouthyd and forſloggyd and deſtroyeth alle goodes temporell by recheleſnes. the fourth thynge is that accydye is lyke hem that ben in the peyn of helle by cauſe of ſlouth and of her heuynes. For they that be dampned be ſo bounde that nether may they doo wel ne thynke wel.
Of accydye cometh firſt that a man is anoyed and encombryd to doo ony goodnes and maketh that god hath abhompnacyon of ſuche accydye as ſayth ſaynt Johan. Now compth ſlouth that wyl ſuffre no hardnes ne no penaūce For ſoth ſlouth is ſo delycate and ſo tendre as ſayth ſalamon that he wyl ſuffre non hardnes ne penaunce and therfore he ſhendeth al þ he doth. Ayenſt this roten horyd ſynne of accydye or ſlouthe ſholde men exercyſe hem to do good werkys manly and vertuouſly catchen corage wel to doo. Thynkyng that our lord Ihesu Cryſte quyteth euery good dede be it neuer ſo lytyl vſage of it is a grete thyng. For it maketh os ſayth Saynt Bernard the laborer to haue ſtrong armys and harde ſynewys. And ſlouth maketh hem feble and tendre. Than compth drede for to begynne to werony good werkys. For certes he that is enclyned to ſynne hym thynketh it is to grete an empryſe for to vndertake to doo werkys of goodnes as ſayth Saynt Gregore.
Now compth wanhope that is dyſpayr of the mercy of god that comith ſomtyme of to myche outrageous ſorowe and ſomtyme of myche drede ymagynyng that he hath doo ſo moche that it wolde not auayle him though he wold repente hym and do goode. Thrugh whiche dyſpar or drede. he aboundeth in herte to euery maner ſynne. As ſayth Saynt Auguſtyn. Whiche þ is dampnable

yf it contynue to his ende. it is cleped
synnyng in the holy ghoost.
This horryble synne is so perrylous
that he that is dispeyred that there is
no felonye ne no synne that he dout
teth for to doo as shewed wel by Iu-
das. Certes thenne aboucn alle
is this synne most displeysaunt and
most aduersary to Cryst. Certes he
that dyspeyreth is lyke the cowarde
champyon recreaunt and nedeles dis
peyreth. For certes the mercy of god
is euer redy to the penytent. Hit is
aboue al his werkys. Alas can not
a man bethynke hym on the gospel
of saynt Luke. Luce vij. where as
Cryst sayth that as wel shalle there
be more Ioye in heuen vpon a syn-
full man that doth penytence than v-
pon xxxtty and ix. ryghtfull men
neden no penytence. Loke ferther in
the gospel the Ioye and the festis off
the good man that had lost his sone
whan his sone with repentaunce was
retorned to his fader. Can they not
remembre eke as sayth saynt Luke
xxiij. how that the theef that was
hanged besyde Ihesu. Sayde lord re-
membre on me whan thou comest
to thy regne For sothe said Cryst. this
day shalt thou be with me in para-
dys. Certes there is none soo horryble
synne of man that it ne may in hys
lyf be destroyed by penytence thrugh
vertu of the passyon of Cryste.
Alas what nedeth man thenne to be
dyspeyred sythen his mercy is so re-
dy. gyue and haue. Thenne co-
meth somnolence that is sluggy
slumbrynge whiche maketh a man
to be heuy and dul in body and in so
wle And this synne cometh of slouth
And certes the tyme as by wey off
reson men shold not slepe that is by
the morowe but yf it were cause reso
nable. for soth in the morow is most
conuenable a man to say his prayers
& for to thynke on god & to honou-
re god and to gyue almes to the pou
re that first comen in the name off
cryst. Lo what Salamon sayth.
Who so wyl by the morowe a walke
to seke me he shal synde me.
Thenne cometh necligence or reche-
lesnes that reketh of no thyng.
And how that Ignoraūce is moder
of alle harme. Certes necligence is
the norys. negligence doth no force
whan he shold doo a thyng whether
he doo it wel or badly: Of the reme-
dye of thyse two synnes as sayth the
wyse man that he that dredeth god
sparyth not to doo that hym ought
to doo. And he that loueth god wyll
do dilygence to plese god by his wer
kys and habounden hym self with
al his myght wel for to doo. Thenne
cometh ydelenes that is the pate of all
harmys an ydle man is lyke to a
place that hath no wallys the deuyll
may entre on euery syde. This ydle-
nes is the thurrok of alle vylenys &
wycked thoughtes and of alle Ian-
glys. trifflys & al ordure. Certes heuē
is peuen to hem that wyl laboure &
not to ydlemen. Eke dauyd sayth.

That they be not in the labour off men ne they shall not be whypped wyth men that is to saye in purga= tory. Certes thēne semyth it they shal be tormentyd wyth the deuyl in hel= le. but yf they doo penytence. Then= ne comyth the synne that men clepen trodytas as whan a man is so lettid and so taryed or he wyl turne to god and certes that is a grete folye. he is lyke hym that falleth in the dyche & wyl not aryse. And this vice comyth of fals hope that he thynketh that he shalle lyue long but that hope fayl= leth ful oft. Thenne comyth laches that is he that whan he begynneth ony good werke anon he wyl forlete it and stynte as doo they that haue ony wyght to gouerne and take off hym ne kepe. Anon as they fynde o= ny contrarye or ony anoye. Thyse ben the newe shepherdes that leten her sheep wytyngly goo renne to the wolf that is in the bretes and do no force of her owen gouernaunce. Off this comyth pouerte and destruction both of spirituel and temporel thyn= ges Thenne comyth a maner of cold nes that freseth alle the herte of man Thenne comyth vndeuocion thrugh whiche a man is so blont. As sayth sayne Bernard and hath suche lan= goure in his sowle that he ne may re= de ne synge in holy chyrchen e here ne thynke of deuocion ne traueyle with hys hondes in no good werke but it is to hym vnsauorye and alle apal= lyd thenne weyth he sore sluggysshe and slumbrye & soon wyl he be wroth and soon is enclyned to hate and to enuye And thenne comyth the synne of worldly sorowe. that is clepyd tris ticia. that sleeth a man as saith saint Poule. For certes suche sorowe wer= kyth to the deth of the deth of the so= wle and of the body also. For therof comyth that a man is anoyed of his owen lyf for suche sorowe shortyth the lyf of many a man or that his ty me come by waye of kynde Ayenst this horryble synne of accidye & the braunchis of the same there is a ver tue that is called fortytudo or strenq the that is affeccion thrugh whiche man despyseth alle other thynges no pous This virtu is so myghty and so bygorous that it dar wyth stande mygthtyly & wrastle ayenst the sawe tes of the deuyl and wysely kepe him self fro parrellys that ben wycked. For it enhaūsyth & enforsyth the suol Right as accidye abateth it & malsith it feble For this fortitudo may endu re wyth long suffraunce the traueyl= lys that ben resonable. This vertu hath many spyces the fyrst is clepyd magnanymyte that is to saye grete corage. For certes there behoueth gre te corage ayenst accidye lest that yt swalowe the sowle by the synne off sorowe or destroye it wyth wanhope

This maketh folke to vndertake hard and greuous thynges by her o= wen wyl wysely and resonably. And for as moche as the deuyl fighteth a yenst man more by queyntise and by

slepyght than by strenthe therfore a man shal wythstonde hym by wyt by reson and by discrecion. Thenne ben there the vertues of feyth and hope in god and in his sayntes to achyeuen and complyche the good werkis in whiche he purposeth fermly to cõtynue. Thenne comyth sewerte and sykernes. And that is whan a man doth and perfourmeth grete werkys of goodnes that he hath begonne. And that is the ende why men sholde doo good werkys. For in the complysshyng of good werkys lieth the grete guerdon. Thenne is the constãce that is stablenes of corage.

And this shold be in herte by stedfast feyth and in mouth and in berynge in chere and in dede. Eke there ben no specyal thynges and remedyes a penst accydye in dyuerse werkys & in consyderacion of the peyne of helle and of the Ioye of heuen. And in trust of the grace of the holy ghoost that wyl yeue hym myght to perfurme his entente.

Sequitur de Auaricia.

a After Accidye nowe thyl I speke of auarice and of couetyse of whiche synne said Saynt Poule. The rote of al synne is couetyse. For sothly whan the herte of a man is confounded in hit self and troublyd & that they soule hath lost the comforte of god. Thenne seketh he any vdle solas of worldly thynges. Auarice after discripsiõ of same Austyn is a licherousnes in herte to haue erthely thynges. Somme other folke that auarice is for to purchase many erthly thynges and nothing yeue to hem that haue nede. And vnderstonde well that auarice is not only in good and in catel. but somtyme in science and in glorie and in euery outrageous thynges is auarice and couetyse And the dyfference bytwene auarice and couetyse is thys. Couetise is for to coueyte suche thinges as thou hast not. And auarice is to wythholde and to kepe suche thynges as thou hast wythout ryghtfull nede. Sothly this auarice is a synne ful dampnable for al holy wryt cursyth it & spekyth agenst it for hit doth wrong to Ihesu Cryst. For it bereuyth fro hym the loue that men to hym owen & tornyth it backward agenst alle reson and makyth that the auarous man hathe more hope in his catel thenne in Ihesu cryst. And therfore sayth Saynt Poule. That an auarous man hath more hope in his thraldom of ydolatrye than in god. what dyfference is betwix an ydolastre and an auaricyous man. Peraventure an ydolastre hath but one mawment or two. And the auarycious man hath many. For certes euery floreyn in hys coffre is his mawment. And certes the synne of mawmentrye god forbedeth in the ten cõmaundementis as beryth wytnes. Exo. xx cap. Thou

shalt haue no fals goddis bifore me ne thou shalt make the no graued thyng But an auarycious man louyth more his tresour forgyd. And thrugh this synne of auarice & of couetyse comyth thyse hard lordshippis thrugh whiche men bestreyned by talagys customs and carpagys more than her dute or reson is. Or ellys take they of her bond men amercemen tis. whyche myght more resonably be callyd extorcions than amercemē tis. Of whiche amercementis and raunsonyngys of bond men. Some lordys styward̄s sayn that it is rtgh̄ful. For as mykel as a chorle hath no trmporel thyng that it ne is hys lordys as they sayn. But certes thyse lordshyppis don wrong that be tryuen her bonde folke thynges that they neuer paf hem. Augustynus de ciuitate dei libro iy. Sayth that soth is that the condycion of thraldom & the first cause of thraldom is for sinne. Genesis 8. Thus may ye see þ the gylte destrueth thraldom and not nature. wherefor thyse lordes shold not glorye hem in her lordshyppys syth that by naturel condycyon they be not lordes of her thrallys. but that thraldom come first by synne. And ferthermore there as the lawe sayth þ temporell lordys of bonde folke ben the goodes of her lordshyppys ye that is for to vnderstonde the goodys off the emperour to defende hem in her right but not to robbe hem ne to reue hem. And therfore sayth Seneca. Thy prudence shold lyue benygnely wyth the thral. that thou clepest thy thral ben goddys peple. For humble folke ben crystes frendes. they be cōtubernyal wyth the lord. Now comyth discord betwene marchaunt & marchaunt. And thou shalt vnderstonde that marchaundyse is in many maners. That one is bodely and that other is ghostly. that one is leef full and that other is dishoneste and vnlefful. That bodely marchaundyse that is lefful & honest is this. that there as god hath ordeyned that a reame or a contre is suffycient to hym self it is honest and lefful that the habound daunce of this contree may helpe another contre that is more nedeful. And therfor ther must be marchaundyse to bringe from one contree to another theyr marchandyse That other marchaundyse is þ men haunten fals othis wyth fraude trecherye and dysceyte wyth lesinges cursyd and dampnable Spyrytuel marchandyse is properly symonye. That is entent̄yf desyre to thing spyrituel That is thyng that appertayneth to the seruyse of god and to the cure of soule. This desyre yf so be that a man doo his dylygence to perfourme it. alle be it that his desyre take none effect. yet is it to hym a dedely synne. And yf he be ordred he is Irreguler. Certes symonye is clepyd of Symon magus that wolde by temporell catel haue bought the yefte that god had yeuen by the holy ghost to seynt peter & to the apostlis

And therfore vnderstonde ye that both he that selleth and he that byeth thynges spyrituel ben clepyd symonyakes. Be it catel be it procurynge or by flesshly prayers of his frendys or ofte spyrytuelle frendes.

Flesshly in two maners as by kynrede and by other frendys. Nothyng yf they praye for hym that is not abyle ne worthy. it is symonye yf he take the benefyce. And yf he be worthy and able it is none. That other maner is whan men or women prayen for folke to auaunce hem only for wycked flesshly affection that they haue to the persones. that is foul symonye. But certes in scrupce for whiche men yeuen thynges spyrituel vnto her seruaunts it must be vnderstode that the scrupse be honest or elles not. And eke that it be wythout bargaynynge and that the persone be able. For as sayth Saynt Damas. Alle the synnes of the world at regard of this synne ben as thynge of nought. For it is the grettest synne that may be after the synne of lucifer. and of antecrysti. For by this synne god forlesyth the chirche & the soule that he bought wyth his precyous bloode by hem that yeuen chyrches to them that be not dygne.

For they put in theuys that stelen the sowlys of Jhesu Cryst and destroye his patrymonye. By suche vndigne preestys and curates haue men the lesse reuerence of the sacramentis of holy chirche. And suche yeuers of chirches put out the chyldren of cryst and put in to chirchys the deuelys owen childre. they sellen the sowlys þ shalle kepe the lambys to the wolf þ strongele hem. And therfore shal they neuer haue parte of the pasture of lambys that is in the blysse of heuen. Now cometh hasardrye wyth his appertenaunces as tablys. quardes. and reuellys. Of whiche cometh dyscrey fals othis. chidyngys. and alle raueyns. blasphemynges. renyng of god. hate of his neyghbours. wast of goodys myspendyng of tyme. And somtyme manslaughter. Certes hasardours may not be wythout grete synne whyles they haunten that craft. Of auarice comyth ekte. lesynges. theft. fals wytnes. and fals othes. And ye shal vnderstande þ these ben grete synnes and expresse ayenst the commaundements of god as I haue sayde. Fals wytnes is eke in word and in dede. In worde as to bytrue thy neyghbours good name by thy fals wytnessyng or accusest hym by thy fals wytnes. or elles excusyst thy self falsely. ware ye questmongers and notarys. Certes for fals wytnes was susanna in grete sorowe and peyn & many another mo. The synne of theft is expresse also ayenst goddys heest & that in two maners. temporel & spyrituel. The temporel theefte is as for to take thy neyghbours catel ayenst his wyl be it be force or by slyght be it in metynge or mesure. by sielyng by fals endytementis vpon hym. & in borowynge

thy neyghbours catel in entent neuer to paye and semblable thynges.

Spyrytuel theefte is sacrylege / is to saye ontyng of holy thynges. or off thynges sacred to Cryst in two maners. by reson of the holy place. As chircheyerdys for euery violent synne that men doo in suche place may be cleppd sacrylege. Also they that falsely wytholde the ryghtes of holy chirche. and pleyn and generally sacrylege is to reue holy thynge out off holy place. or vnholy thyng out off holy place. or holy thyng out of vnholy place. Now shal ye vnderstonde that reuelynge of auarice is mistericorde and pite largely taken. And men myght aske why that mistericorde and pyte is reuelyng of auarice. Certes the auarycyous man shewed no pyte ne mistericorde to the nedefulman For he deliteth hym in kepyng of his tresour. & not in the rescowyng ne in the releuyng of euery Crystien. And therfore spekke I first of mistericorde.

Thay is myserycorde as saith the philosophre a vertu by whyche corage of mā is stired by the myseise of hym / is myseised. vpon the wiche miserycorde wyth pyte in perfourmyng of charytable werkys of mercy helpeth and conforteth hym that is myseised And certes this meuyth men to the myserycorde of Jhesu crist that hym self suffryd for our gylt he suffred deth for myserycorde and forgaf vs our orygynal synnes and therby releeyd fro the peyne of helle & amenusyd the peyn of purgatorye The spyces of mistericorde ben as for to lene and yeue for to reue And for to forgeue and for to release. and for to haue pyte in herte and compassyon of myschief of thyn euen cristen And ellis chastyte there as nede is.

Another remedye ayenst auarice is resonable larges. But soothly her be houeth the consyderacion of our lord Jhesu Cryst and of his grace and of his temporel goodys and ellis off the goodys perdurable that crist paf vs. And ellis to haue remembraunce of the deth that he shal deye and receyue. And he woot not whan And ellis that he shal forgoon alle that he hath dyspendyd and goten in goodys.

But for as moche as somme folke be vnmesurable. men oughten eschewe fool largesse / men clepen waste

Certe he that is foollarge he yeueth not his catel but he lesyth his catel Certes what thyng that he yeueth for veynglorye as to mynstrals and to folke that bere his renome in the world he hath doo synne and none almes. Certes he that lesyth fool his good and sekyth no thynge but synne. he is lyke to an hors that sekyth rather to drynke droppy water & troubly thā water of the clere welle To hem apperteynen the malyson / Cryste shal yeue atte day of dome to hem that shul be dampned.

Sequitur de Gula.

After auarice compth glotonye. Whiche is expresse ayenst the commaundement of god. Glotonye is vnmesurable appetyte to ete or to drynke. or ellys to ete vnmesurably out of tyme more than nedeth is glotonye. This synne corrupted al this worlde as is wel shewed in the synne of Adam & Eue. Lo eke what sayth sayntPoule of glotonye. Many men sayth he of whiche I haue oft sayde you. and now I saye it wepyng that they be enemyes of the crosse of cryst. Of whiche the ende is deth and of whiche her wombe is her god. and her glorye in confusion of hem that so sauryn erthely thynges. He that is vsaunt to this synne of glotonye. he may no synne withstonde. he mote be in seruage of alle vyces for it is the deuyls horde there he hydeth hym in and restyd. This synne hath many spyces. The first is dronkenes. that is the horryble sepulture of mannys reson. And therfore whan that a man is dronke he hath lost his reson and this is dedely synne. But certes whan a man is not wont to straunge drynkes & peraventure knowyth not the strength of the drynke or hath feblenes in his hede or hath trauelled thrugh whiche he dryncketh the more. all be he sodeynly caugh with drynke it is no dedely synne but venyal. The second spyce of glotonye is. that the spirite of a man wayth all troble For dronkenes bereueth hym discreció of his wyt. The third spice of glotonye is whan a man deuoureth hys mete and hath no rightful maner of etyng. The fourth is whan thrugh the grete habundaunce of his mete the humours of his body ben distempryd. The fyfthe is forpetefulnes by to moche drynkyng. For whiche a man forpetyth by the morowe what he dyd ouer Eue. In another maner ben distyncte the spyces of glotonye after sayntGregorie. The first is for to ete before tyme. The secõd is whã. a man getyth hym to delycate mete The thyrd is whan a men taken to myckel ouer mesure.

The fourth is curyosyte wyth grete entente to maken and apparaylle his mete. The fyfthe is for to ete gredyly. And these ben the fyue fyngers of the deuylys honde by whiche he drawyth folke to synne. Ayenst glotonye is the remedye abstynence off his body and sayth Galyene. but I holde I not meryorye yf he doo hit only for hele of hys body. Sayntt Austyn wole þ abstynence be do by vertu and wyth pacience. Abstynence he sayth is lytyl worth but yf he haue good wyll. & but he be enforced by pacience & by charyte And þ men do it for goddys sake. & in hope to haue the blysse in heuen The selawes of abstynence ben attemperaunce that holdeth the mene in al thynges elle shame þ eschewyth al dyshoneste sufysaunce þ seketh no riche metys ne drynkes ne doth no force off none outrageous appareylyng of mete.

Also that restreyneth by reson the delaupe apetyte of etyng and dryn-kyng. Sobrenes also that restrey-neth the outrage of dronkē. Spa-rynge also that restreyneth the dylica-te ease to sytte long at his mete. Wher fore somme folke stonden of her o-wen wylle whan they ete by cause they wolde ete at lasse leyser.

Sequitur de Luxuria.

After Glotenye thenne co-meth lecherye. for thyse two synnes ben so nygh cosyns that oft tyme they wol not departe. God woot this syne is full dysple-saunt to god. For he sayde hym selff doo no lecherye. And therfore he put-teth gret peynes ayenst this synne. For in thold lawe if a woman thral were taken in this synne she sholde be betyn with staues to the deth. And yf she were a gentyl woman she shold be slayn with stones. And yf she were a bysshoppys doughter she shold be brent by goddys com-maundement. Furthermore for the synne of lecherye god dreynt alle the world. And after that he brent fyue cytees and sanke doun in to helle. Now lete vs speke thenne of the syn-ne of lecherye þ men clepen aduoul-trye that is of weddyd folke that is to saye yf that one of hem ben wed-dyd or ellys bothe.

Saynt Johan sayth þ thaduoutrers shulle be in a stynkyng brennynge pytte of fyre and bremston for lecher-rye is lykened to bremstone for the stynk of her ordure. Certes the bere uyng and brekyng of thys Sacra-ment is an horrible thyng. Hit was made of god hym self in paradyse & confermed by Jhesu Cryste.

As sayth Saynt Mathew in the gos-pel A man shall lete fader and moder and take hym to hys wyf. And they shal be two in one flesh. This sacra-ment betokeneth the knyttyng to gy-der of Cryst & holy chirche. & not on-ly that god forbad auoutry in de-de. But ekē he commaunded þ thou sholdest not couete thy neyghbours wyf. In this heest saith saint Austin Almaner couetyse to doo lecherye is forboden. Lo what sayth Saynt Mathew in the gospel who so seeth a woman to couetyse of his lust. he hath don lechery with her in his her-te. Here may ye se þ not only the dede of this synne is forbode. but ekē the desyre to do þ synne. This cursyd synne anoyeth greuously hem that it haunte & first to the soule. For he ob-ligeth it to synne & to peyne of deth þ is perdurable. & to the body anoyeth it greuously. For it dreyeth hym. And of his blood he maketh sacrafyse to the feende of helle. hit wasteth his ca-tel and his substaunce. & certes yf hit be a foul thing a man to waste hys catel on women. yet is it a fouler thing þ whan for suche ordure wo-men spenden vpon men her catell & substance. This synne as sayth the

prophete bereueth a man ꝛ a woma̅ her good fame and alle her honoure And it is ful playsaunt to the deuyl for ther by wynneth he the most part of this world. And right as a marchaunt delyteth hym moost in chaffare that he hath most auaunta ge of. Right so delyteth the fende in this ordure. This is that other hand of the deuyl with fyue fingres to cat che the pepse to this vilonie The first fynger is the foule lokyng of the fol woman that sleeth right as the basily ko̅ sleeth folke by the venym of his syght for couetyse of the eyen folo weth the couetyse of the herte. The second fynger is the vylayns tou chyng in wycked maner. And ther fore sayth Salamon. That who so touchyth and handelyth a woman. he sarpth lyke hym that handeleth the scorpion that stingeth and so depnly steeth thrugh his enuenymyng or as who so touchyth pitche he shen dyth his fyngrys. The third is foule wordes that sarpth lyke fyre ꝑ bren nyth that right anon brennyth the herte. The fourth is kyssyng ꝛ trewly he were a grete foole ꝑ wold kisse the mouth of a brennyng ouyn or of a furneys And more foolis ben they that kyssen in vylonye For ꝑ mouth is the mouthe of helle.

And namely thyse olde do tardys holours yet wyl they kysse though they may not do and smater hem Certes they be lyke to houndys for an hound whan he comyth by the Roser or by other benchys yf he may not pisse yet wyl he heue ꝑ his legge and make contenaunce to pisse

And for that man wenyth that he may not synne for lycherousnes that he doth with his wyf. Certes that opynyon is fals Good woot a man may sle him self with his owen knif and make hym dronk with his o wen tonne. Certes be it wyf or chyld or worldly thynge that he loued be fore god it is his mawment. and he is an ydolastre. man shold loue his wyf by discrecion pacyently and at temperatly. ꝛ than is she as though she were his sustet. The fyfthe fyn ger of the deuyllys honde is the syn kyng dede of lecherye. he gryppeth hym by the reynes for to throwe hym in to the furneys of helle. there as they shal haue the fyre and the wor mys that euer shal lastyn. wepyng ꝛ walyng. sharpe hunger and thirst Grisslynes of deuyllys that shul alle to trede hym without respite ꝛ with outen ende. Of lecherye as I sayd sourden dyuerse spyces as forny cacion ꝑ is betwyx man and woman that ben not maryed ꝛ this is dedely synne ꝛ ayenst nature ꝛ distruccio̅ to nature is ayenst nature Resey the re son tellyth hym eke that it is dedely synne for as moche as god forbad le cherye. ꝛ saint Poule reuelyth hym the regne ꝑ is due to no wyght. but to hem ꝑ done dedely synne. another syn of lecherye is to bereuen a mayde off her maydenhede. for certes he ꝑ so dot he catchid a mayde out of the hiest de gre ꝑ is in this present lyf. ꝛ bereueth

her that precious fruyt that the bok clepeth the hondred fruyt. I can saye it none other wyse in Englisshe. but in latyn it hyght centesimus fructꝰ

Certes he that so doth is cause of many dommages & vyloneys moo than ony man can reken. Ryght as he somtyme is cause of alle dommages that bestys doo in the felde þ breketh the hedge of the closure thrughe whiche he distropeth þ may not be restoryd. For certes nomore may maydenhede be restored. than ony arme that is smyten fro the body may retorne ayen to weye. She may haue mercy this woot I wel. yf she do penytence. but neuer shal it be: but þ she is corrupt. And al be it so that I haue spoke somwhat of auoultrye it is good to shewe mo perilles that longen to auoultrye for to eschewe the foule synnys of auoultrye. In latyn it for to saye thapprochyng of another mannys bed. thrugh which they that were one flesshe habounden her bodyes to other persones. Of this synne as sayth the wyse may come many harmys. first brekyng off feyth. & certes feyth is keye of crystendome. And whan that keye is broken & lorn certeyn crystendom standeth wythout fruyt. This synne is eke theft for theefte generally to speke of. is for to reue a thyng of a mã ayenst his wyl. Certes this is the foulest theefte that may be whan a woman steleth her body from her husbond & yeueth it to her heloure to destroule it. and steleth her soule from cryst and yeueth hit to the deuyl. This is a foule theft for to stele and breke the chalis. For thyse aduoultreris breken the temple of god spiritually and stelen the vessel of grace. That is the body and the sowle. For whiche Cryst shalle destroye hem as sayth saynt Poule. Sothly of this theefte doubtyd gretely Joseph. whan that his lordes wyf prayed hym off vylonye whan he sayde. Lo my lady how my lorde hath take to me vnder my warde all that he hath vnder this worlde. Ne no thyng is out of my power but only ye þ be hys wyf

And how shold I thenne doo this wyckednes and synne soo horrible ayenst god. Alas al to sylyl is suche trouthe now I founde. The thyrde harme is. the fylthe thrugh whiche they breke the commaundement off god and defoule the auter of her matrymonye that is Cryst. For certein so myche as the sacremẽt of mariage is so noble and so dygne soo moche it is the gretter synne to breke it for god made mariage in paradyse in the state of Innocencye to multeplye mankynde to the seruice of god. & therfore is the brekyng therof greuous. Of whiche brekyng come false heyres. often tyme þ wrongfully occupyen folkes heritages. & therfore wyl crist put hem out of the regne of heuen that is heritage to good folke. Of this brekyng compth eke that folke vnwaar wedde. Al

synne wyth her owen kynrede. And namely the herlottis that haunten bordelys. Thyse fool women mowe be ly3tened to a comyn gonge where as men pryche her ordure. what saye we ellis of putriers that lyuen by the horryble synne of putrye. and constreyn womonen. ye somme her owen wyues or his chylde as don thyse bawdys to yelde hem a certeyn rente of her bodely putrye. Certes thyse ben cursyd synnys. Understonde ye ellis that aduoultrye is sette compnly in the ten commaundementis betwene theft and manslaughter. For it is the grettest theste that may be. For it is theste of body and of sowle And it is lyke to homycyde. For it kerueth a two hem that first were made one flesshe. And by the olde lawe they shold be slayn. But neuertheles by the lawe of Jhesu cryst that is the lawe of pyte. whan he sayd to the woman that was founde in auoultrye. and shold haue be slayn wyth stones after the wyll of the Jewys as was her lawe. Goo quod Jhesu cryst and haue no more wylle to doo synne. Sothly vengeaunce of aduoultrye is awarded to the peyne of helle.

But it be dyffourbyd wyth penaūce yet ben there mo sppces of this cursyd synne as whan that one of them is relygyous or ellys bothe. or of folke that ben entrid in to ordre as subdekyn. or dekyn. prest or hospitalers And euer the hyer that he is in ordre the gretter is the synne. For they haue made grete vowys to kepe chastyte. This synne of brekyng off hys auowe of chastyte is whan he receyued order. And soth it is that holy order is chyef of alle the tresour of god and is a special sygne and marke of chastyte which that is the mooste precyous lyf that is. And ellis this ordred folke ben specially titled to god for whiche whan they doo dedely synne. they ben the special traytours off god and of his peple. For they lyue by the peple to praye for the peple. And whyles they be suche traytours her prayers auayle not to the people Prestys ben as aungellys as by the mystery of her dygnyte. But forsoth Saynt Poule sayth that sathanas transfourmeth hym in an aungel of lyght. Sothly the prest that haunteth synne he may be lykened to an aungel of derknes traunsfourmed in to an aungel of lyght. he semeth an aungel of lyght. But forsoth he is an aungel of derknes. Suche prestis ben the sone of hely as is shewed in the booke of kynges that they were the sonys of belyal. that is the deuyl. Belyal is to saye wythouten Juge. And so faren they. hem thynketh that they be free and haue noo Juge nomore than hath a free bole that taketh whyche cowe that hym lyketh in the town. So faren they by women. For right as a free bole is ynough for alle a town.

Ryght so is a corrupte Prest ynough for alle a parysshe or a contre. Thyse prestis as sayth the booke know not the mynystery of prestehod

to the people ne to god ne they holde hem not apayed as sayth the boke of soden flesshh that was to hem offryd. but they take by force the flesshh that is rawe. Certes right so thyse shrewys holde hem not a payed off rostyd flesshh and soden wyth whiche the peple feden hem in grete reuerence. But they wyl haue rawe flesshe as folkys wyuys and her doughters. And certes theyse women that consentyng to her harlotys do grete wrong to cryste and to holy chyrche to alle halowys and to alle sowlys. For they bereuen hem alle that shold worshyp cryst and holy chirche And also to prayen for alle crysten soulis And therfore haue suche prestys and her lemmans that consentyng to her lecherye the malyson of the crysten court tyl they come to amendement. The thirde spyce of aduoultry is somtyme betwyx a man and his wyf. And that is whan they take noo regarde in theyr assemblyng but only for flesshly delyte as sayth saynt Jherome and recke of nothyng but they be assemblyd by cause they be maryed. Al is good ynough as thynketh to hem. But in suche folke hath the deuyl power as sayde the aungel Raphael to Tobye. For in her assemblyng they put Jhesu Cryste out off her herte. and yeue hem self to ardure The fourth spyce is of hem that assemblyn by her kynrede or of hem that ben of one affynyte. Or ellys wyth hem wyth whom her faders had delyd wyth the synne of lecherye. This synne maketh hem lyke houndes that taken none hede of kynrede. And certes parentela is in two maners. or ghoostly. flesshly. ghoostly is for to delyn wyth her gossybs. For right so as a godfader is her fader spyrytuel. For whiche a woman may in no lesse synne semble wyth her gossyb than wyth her owen broder The fyfthe synne is that abhompnable synne of whiche no man ought to speke ne wryte. neuertheles it is openly rehersed in holy wryt. Certes holy wryt may not be defouled more than the sonne that shyneth on a donhyll Another synne appertayneth to lecherye that cometh in slepyng. And this synne cometh ofte to hem that ben maydens and elde to hem that ben corrupt. And this synne is cleped pollucyon. That cometh in foure maners. Somtyme it cometh of langupysshyng of the body of man. Somtyme it cometh of Infirmyte for the febleues of the vertue retentif as phisyk maketh mencyon. Somtyme of surfete of mete and drynke. And somtyme for vyolente thoughtis that ben enclosyd in mannys mynde whan he goth to slepe. whiche may not be wyth out synne For whiche men kepe hem wyselyn. or ellys may they synne greuously. Now cometh remedye ayenst lecherye. that is generally chastyte and contynence that refreyneth al dysordynate meuyngys that comyn of flesshly talentys. And euer the gretter meryte shalle he haue that refreyneth most the wrecched chbuffing

ordenaūce of this synne. And this is in two maners. that is to saye chastyte of marryage and chastyte of wydowhede. Now shalt thou vnderstōde that matrimonye is lefful assemblyng of man and woman that receyuen the vertue of the sacrament. The bonde whiche that may not be departyd in al her lyf. thys is to saye whyles they lyue bothe This is as sayth the booke a ful grete sacrement God made it as I haue sayd in paradyse and wold hym self be born in marryage. And for to halowe marryage he was atte weddynge where he tourned water into wyn. whiche was the first myracle þ he wrought in erthe to fore his dysciples. The true effect of marryage clensyth fornycacyon and replenysseth holy chyrche of good lygnage. For as the ende of marryage chaungyth dedely synne into venyal bytwene hem that been weddyd & maketh the hertes al one as wel of hem as the bodyes. This is very marryage that is stablysshed by god or that synne began whan naturel lawe was in his right point in paradys And it was ordeyned þ a woman shold haue but one man. as sayth sayntAustyn by many resons

Fyrst that marryage is fygured bytwene cryst and holy chirche. And another is that a man is hede of the womā al̄ regle by ordenaūce it shold be also For yf a woman had mo mē than one. thenne shold he haue moo hedys than one. And that were an horrybleth̄nge before god. And elles a woman myght not plese many folkes attones. And also there shold neuer be pees ne rest amonges hem for euerich wold assaye his owen thyng. And forther more no man shold knawe his owen engendrure ne who shold haue his eryage. And the woman shold be lasse loued fro the tyme þ she were commyxt wyth many. Now compth how a man shold bere hym wyth his wyf and namely in two thyngys þ is to saye in suffraūce & in reuerēce & this shewyd fyrst Cryst whan he fyrst wo man. For he made her not of Adams heed. For she shold not haue to grete lordshyp For there as the woman hath the mastrye she maketh to moche disaray. There nede none ensaumplys of this. Theyperyence that we haue day by day ought to suffyce. Also certes ne he made not the woman of the fete of Adam. For she shold not be holde to lowe For he can not paciently suffre But god made woman of the Ryb of Adam. For woman shold be folowre vnto man. Man shold bere hym to hys wyf. in sayth. i trouth & in loue As saith saint poule and that men shold loue his wyf as cryst dyd holy chirche that loued it so wel þ he deyed for it. So shold a mā for his wyf yf it were nede. Now how þ a woman sholde be subget to her husbond þ tellyth Saint Peter & elles as sayth the decre. A woman as long as she is a wyf. she hath none

auctorite to swere ne to bere wytnes wythout leue of her husbond. And also she shold be honest and attempe rat of aray. I wote wel that they shol sette her entent to plese her hus= bond. But not by queyntise of her a= raye. Saynt Jherome sayth that wy ues ben aparayled in sylke and in purpure may not clothen hem in thū crysi. Saynt Gregore sayth elle þ no wyght seketh no precious araye but only veyn glorie to be honoured the more before the peple. it is grete folye a woman to haue grete araye outward & her self to be foūl inward A wyf shuld elle be mesurable. in so kyng in beryng and in lawhyng & discrete in al her wordes and her de= des And aboue all worldly thynges she shold haue her husbond wyth all her herte and to hym be trewe of her body. So shold euery husbond elle be trewe to his wyf. For sythen alle the body is the husbondes soo shold her herte be also. or ellys there is be= twyx hem two no parfigh mariage as ȳ that. Thay shalle a man vn= derstonde that for thre thynges a mā and his wyf mowe assemble. The first for thentent of gendrure of chyl dren to the seruyse of god. For certes that is the cause fynal of matrymo ny. That other is to yelde euerychc of hem the dette of her body: For nether of hem hath power of his owen bo= dy. The third is for theschewe leche= rye and vylonye The fourth forsoth is dedely synne. As to the first it is merytorye. The second also for the dette sayth she hath meryte for þ she yeldyth to her husbond the dette of her body. ye though it be ayenst her lykyng and the lust of her herte. The third maner whiche is teschewe lecherye. I holde it no dedely synne. But many of thyse be not wythout venyal synne for the corruption and delyte therof. The fourth maner is to vnderstonde yf that they assemble only for amerouse loue and for none of the forsayd causys but for tacom plysshe the brennyng delyte they take neuer how ofte. Yo thky it is a dedely synne. And yet wyth sorowe somme folke wyl peyne hem more to do thā her apetit suffyseth. The second ma= ner of chastyte is to be clene wydowe to eschewe the brasyng of man and to desyre embrasynge of Jhesu Crysi Thyse ben tho that haue ben wyues and haue forgoon her hus= bondes. And elle woman that haue doon lecherye. And be releued by pe= naunce. And certes yf that a wif can kepe her alle chaste by lycence of her husbond. so þ she gaf no cause ner none occasyon that he agylted. thyl were to her grete meryte. These maner of women þ obseruen chasty te must be clene in herte as wel as in body and in thought and mesurable in clothyng and in contenaunce ab= stynently etyng and in drynkynge. In spekyng and in dede. And thenne is she vessel of the boxe of the blessid Maudeleyn that fulfylle holy chirche

ful of good ouere. The thyrd manere of chastyte is virgynyte.
And it behouyth that she be holy in herte and clene of body. Thenne is she the spouse to Jhesu Cryste. And she is the lyf of aungellys. she is the preysyng of this world and she is as thyse maistres in Regalye. She hath in her that tunge may not telle.
Virgynyte bare our lord Jhū Crist And virgynyte was hym self. Another remedye ayenst lecherye is specyally to withdrawe suche thynges as peuply occacion to that vylonye as etyng and drynkyng. For certes whan the pot boyleth strongly. The best remedye is to withdrawe the fyre. Sleppng long in grete quyete is eke a grete norrye to lecherye. Another remedye ayenst lecherye is that a woman or man eschew companye of hem by whiche he demeth to be temptyd for alle be it so that the dede be withstonde yet is there grete temptacion. Sothly a whyte wal al thoughe it brēne not fully by the styngyng of a candel. yet is the wal blacke off the lyght. In lyke wyse ofte tymes suche persones haue euyll name by cause they drawe in vicious companye. Welofte tyme haue I redde that no man trust in his owey perfection but he be strenger than Samson. Holyer than Dauyd. wyser than Salamon. Now after as I haue declared yow as I can of the vii. dedely synnes and somme of her braunches and he remedyes. Sothly yf I coude I wold telle yow the x comaundementis. but so hygh a doctryne I lete to dyuynes. But neuertheles I trust to god they be touched in this tretyse euerich of hem alle.

Adhuc secunda pars penitencie.

Now as to the seconde parte of penytencet stont in confessyon of mouth as I began in the secondchapytre to fore. Saynt Austyn sayth synne is in euery worde and in euery dede. And alle that men coueten ayenst the lawe of Jhesu Cryst And this is for to synne in herte in mouth and in dede by the fyue wyttys. that ben syght. heeryng smellyng. tastyng or sauoryng and felyng. Now is it good to vnderstonde the circumstaūces that agrudgen myche euery synne.
Thou shalt consydere what thou art that dost the synne. wheter thow be male or female. yong or olde. gentyl or thral. fre or seruaūt. wyse or fool. hool or syke. wedded or single. ordred or vnordred. clerk or seculer. yf she be of the kyndrede bodyly or ghostly or none. a mayden or none. in manere of homicide or none. horrybly grete synne or smal. and how longe thou hast contynued in synne.
The thyrd Circumstaunce is the place where thou hast don synne. whether in other mennys howsis or in thyn owen. In felde or in chirche or in chyrperde. In chirche dedycate or

non. For yf the chirche were halowed and man or woman spylle hys kynde wythin that place by wey of synne or by wicked temptacion the chirche were enterdyted tyl it were reconciled by the bysshop. And the preest shulde be enterdyted that dyde suche vylonye. terme of his lyf and he shold nomore synge masse. and yf he dyde he shold doo dedely synne atte euery tyme that he song masse. The fourth circumstaunce is by suche medyatours as by messangers or for entysement or for cõsentement to bere cõpanye wyth felawshyp. For many one for to bere felawshyp wyl go to the deuyl of helle. For they that eggyn or consentyn to the synne ben parteners to the synne & of the dampnacion of the synnar. The fyfthe is how many tymes that he hath synned and it be in his mynde and how oft he hath falle. For he that ofte fallyth in synne he despyseth the mercy of god and encresyth his synne. And is vnkynde to god And he weyth the more feble to wythstonde synne. And synneth the more lyghtly. And the later ariseth. and the more eschaweth for to shryue hym. And namely to hym that hath ben his cõfessour For whiche that folke whan they falle ayen in her olde folyes they forleten her olde confessours al vterly. Or ellys they departen her shrifte in dyuerse places. But sothly suche departyd shrifte deserueth no mercy of god for his synnes. The fyfte circumstaunce is this why þ a man synneth. as by what temptacion. And of hym self procure thykke temptacyon. or by excytyng of other folke or yf thou synne wyth a woman by force or by her owen assent. Or yf a waman magre her heed haue be enforced or not. & whether for couetyse or pouerte. All this shalt thou telle. & yf it was her procuryng or no and alle suche manet thynges. The seuenth circumstaunce is in what maner he hath doon his synne. or how þ she hath suffryd how folke haue doo to her. and of the same shalle the mã telle alle the circumstaunces. And yf that he haue synned wyth comyn bordel women or none. in fastyng tymes or none. or doon his synne in holy tymes or none. or before hys shryft. or after hys latter shryfte & hath pauetur therfor broke his penaunce enuoyned. by whos help & whos counceyl. by sorcery or craft. al must betolde thyse thynges after that they be grete or smale and grudge the conscience of man or woman. And eke the preest that is the Juge may the better be auysyd of hys Jugement. In yeuyng hys penaunce. and that shal be after his contrycion. For vnderstonde wel that after tyme þ a man hath defouled hys baptysme by synne. yf he wyl come to saluacõ there is none other weye but penaunce and shryft and satysfaction. And namely by the two. yf there be a confessour to whom he may shryue hym

And that he first be verry contrye and repentaunte And the thyrd yf he haue lyst to perfourme it. Thenne shalle man loke and consydere yf he wyl make a trwe and a profytable confessyon. there must be foure condycions. First it must be in sorowful bitternesse of herte as sayd the kyng Ezechye to god I wyl remembre all the yeres of my lyf in the bytternesse of my herte. This condycion of bytternes hath fyue sygnes. The first is that confessyon must be shamefaste not for to couerye ne to hyde his synne But for he hath agylted his god & defouled his soule. And herof sayth Saynt Austyn. The herte traueileth for shame of hys synne. And for he hath grete shamefastnes. he is digne to haue grete mercy. whiche was the confessyon of the pupplycane þ wolde not leste vp his eyen to heuen. For he offendyd god of heuen. For whiche shamefastenes he had lost anoone the mercy of god. And therfore sayth saynt Austyn. That suche shamefast folke ben neyt forgeuenes & remyssyon. That other synne is humylite of confessyon of whiche sayth saynt peter humbleth you vnder the myghty honde of god in confessyon For therby god forgeueth the synnes for he allone hath power. This humylyte shal be in herte and in sygne outwarde. For ryght as he hath humylite to god in his herte Right soo shold he humble his bodi outward to the preest that sytteth in goddes place for whiche in no maner. sythnys þ cryst is souereyn and the preest mene and medyatour bytwene cryste & the synnar. And the synnar is lesse by weye of reson. Than shold not the synnar syte as hygh as his confessour. but knele byforn hym or at his feet but yf malyce destourbe it. For he shal not take kepe who syt there but in whos place he sytteth. A man that hath trespaced to a lord and compth for to aye mercy & make his accorde and sette hym doun anon by the lord. Wen wold holde hym outrageous and not worthy so sone to haue remyssyon ne mercy.

The thyrd sygne is that the shrysfte shold be foul of teris yf man may wepe. And yf a man may not wepe with his bodely eyen lete hym wepe in his herte. Suche was the confessyon of Saynt Peter. For after he had forsake Jhesu Criste he went out and wepte ful bitterly

The fourth sygne is that he lete not for shame to shryue hym and shewe hym hys confessyon. Suche was the confessyon of Wawdelene. that spared for noo shame of hem that were at the feste. For to goo to Our Lord Jhesu Criste and beknowe to hym her synne.

The fyfte sygne is that man and woman be obeysaunt to receyue the penaunce that is enioyned hem. For certes Jhesu Cryste for the gylte of one mā was obedyent to the deth The second condycion of verry confessyon is that it be hastely doon.

For certes yf a man had a dedely

wounde euer the lenger þ he tarved to warysshe hym. the more wolde hit corupte and haste hym to hys deth.

And eke the wounde be the worse for to hele. Ryght so farveth synne that longe tyme is in a man vnshewed. Certes a man ought hastely to shewe his synne for many causes. And for drede of deth that cometh oft tyme so sodenly and is in no certeyn what tyme it shal be ne in what place And eke the lenger he tarveth the ferther is he fro Cryst. And yf he abeyde vnto his last daye. scarcely may he shryve or amende hym for hys synnys or repete hym for the greuous maladye of his deth. And for as moche as he hath not his lyf hertenyd Jhesu Cryste whan he hath spoken vnto hym. he shal crye vnto our Lord at his last day and scarcely he shalle hertken hym vnderstonde þ his condycion must haue foure thynges First that thy shrifte be purueyed a fore and auysed. And that a man can shryve hym of hys synnes be it of pryde or of enuye & soo forth with the spyces and circumstaunces And that he haue comprehendyd in his mynde the nombre and the gretenes of his synnes and how longe he hath leyen in synne and eke that he be contryte of his synnes and be in stedfast purpoos by the grace of god neuer efte to falle ayen in to synne to whyche he is enclyned Also thou shal shryve the of alle thy synnes to one man & not parcelmele to one man & parcelmele to another. Than is it to be vnderstonde in thentent to parten thy confessyon as for shame or drede for it nys but stranglyng in the soule. For certes Jhesu Cryst is al good in hym is none Imperfection: And therfore he forgeueth al parfyghtly. and ellys neuer a deel. I saye not yf thou be assygned to the penetaunter for certeyn synne that thou art bounde to shewe hym al the remenaunt of thy synnes of whiche thow hast be shryuen of thy curate but yf it lyke the of thyn humblyte. this is no departyng of shrift. ne I saye not there as I spoke of deuysyon of confessyon that yf thou haue lycence to shryve the to a discrete & an honest preest & where the lyketh. and by the lycence of thy curate. þ thou ne mayst well shryve the of al thy synnes. but leet no blot behynde. lete no synne be vntolde as fer as thou hast remembraunce. And whan thou shalt be shryuen of thy curate. telle hym eke al the synnes that thou hast don syth thou were last shreuyn. Also the verry shrifte aseyth certeyn condycions. First thou shalt shryue the by thy free wyll not constreined ne for shame of folke ne for maladye or suche thynges. for it is reson þ he that trespaceth by hys free wyl confesse his trespaas. ne none other man shal telle hys synne. ne wrath hym ayenst the preest for hys amonesshyng to lete hys synne. The second condycion is that thy shrifte be lawful. þ is to say. thou þ shriuest

ge. & elle the preest that herpth thy cõ
fessyon benyngely in the seyth of ho=
ly chirche. and that a man be not de=
speyred of the mercy of Jhesu Cryst
as Cayn and Judas were. And elle
a man must accuse hym self of hys
owen trespaas & not another. But
he shal blame and wyte hym self off
of his owen malice and of his synne
and none other. But neuertheles yff
another man by occheson of confy=
syng of his synnes. or yf the estate of
a persone be suche by whiche his syn
ne is agredgyd or ellys that he may
not pleynly shryue but he telle the
persone whiche hath synned wyth.
thenne may he telle. So that his en=
tente be not to backbyte the persone.
But only to declare hys confessyon.
Thou shalt elle make no lesynge in
thy confessyon for humulyte Pera=
uenture to saye that thou hast doon
synnes of whiche thou were neuer
gylty. For sayne Austyn sayth. yf
thou by cause of humylyte makyst
a lesyng of thy self though thou we=
re not in synne afore. yet art thou in
synne thenne thrugh thy lesynge.
Thou shalt elle shewe thy synne by
thy propre mouth byt thou be dombe
And not by letter. for thou that hast
do synne thou shalt haue the shame
of thy confessyon. Thou shalt not e=
lle peynte thy confessyon by fayre &
subtil wordes to couere the more thy
synne. For thenne begylest thou thy
self. and not the preest. thou must tel
it pleynly be it neuer so horyble ne
so foul. Thou shalt elle shryue the to
a preest that is discrete to counceyl
the. And elle thou shalt not shryue
the for veyn glorye ne for ypocrysye
ne for no cause but only for the doub
te of Jhũ Cryst & the hele of thy sou=
le. Thou shalt not elle renne to the
preest al sodenly to telle hym lyghtly
thy synne as who telleth a tale
but auysedly wyth grete deuocy
on and generall to shryue the ofter
than onys of synne whiche thou hast
be shreuen of. it is the more meryte.
For as sayth sayne Austyn. Thou
shalt haue the more lyghtly relece &
grace of god. both of synne and off
peyne. And certes onys a yere at the
lest weye it is lawful for to be house=
lyd. For sothly ones a yere al thyn=
ges renouelyn.

Incipit tercia pars penitencie.

Now haue I tolde of veryn confessyon þis is the seconde part of penitẽce. The third parte is satisfaction. And stondeth generally in almes dede and in bodely payn. Now ben there thre maner of almesse contricion of herte where a man offryth hym self to god. And ther is to haue pyte of defaute of his neyghbours. The thyrd is in yeuing of good counceyl and comforte bodely and ghostely where men haue nede & namely in substaũce of mãnys food. And take kepe þ a man hath nede of these thynghs generally he

hath nede of food of clothynge and herbero wh. he hath nede of charitable counceyllyng and vysytyng in prysan. & maladye and sepulture off dede bodyes. And yf thou mayst not vysyte the nedeful wyth thy persone. Visite hym with thy message and thy pestes. These ben the general almesses of werkys of charite of hem that haue temporel richesse or discrecion in conceyvyng: Of these werkes shalt thou here at the daye of dome thys almesse sholdest thou doo of thy propre thynges and hastely and pryuely yf thou mayst. But neuertheles if thou mayst not doo it pryuely thou shalt not forbere to do almes though men see it. so that it be not do for thankyng of the world. but only for to haue thankyng of our lord Jhesu Cryste. For as wytnessyth Saynt Mathew A cyte may not be hyd that is sette vpon a mounteyn. Ne men lyght not a lantern and put it vnder a bussh̄el but setten it vpon a candelstyckyng to lyghten the men in the hous. Right so shal your lyght. lyghten before men that they mowe see your good werkys and glorifye your fader that is in heuen. Now as for to speke of bodely peyn. it stond in prayers. in wakyng. in fastyng and in vertuous techyng of orysons. ye shal vnderstonde that orysons or prayers is for to saye. Appetous loye of herte that is redressyd in god and expressyng it be worde outwarde to remeue harmeful thynges and to haue thynges spyrituel and durable and somtyme temporel thynges. Of whi che orysons. in the orysen of Pater nr̄ hath Jhesu crist enclosyth most thynges. Certes it is prvyleged of thre thynges in his dignyte. for whiche it is more digne than any other prayer for that Jhū cryst hym self made hit and it is short. for it sholde be coude the more lygtly. and for to vnderstonde more esely in herte. and helpe hym self the ofter wyth the orysen. And for a man shold be the lesse wery to saye it. & for a man may not excuse hym to lerne it. it is so shorte & so esy. And for it comprehendith in hym self alle good prayers The exposicyon of this holy prayer that is so excellent & sodygne I betake to the maysters off theologye. Saue thus moche wyll I saye. That whan thou prayest that god sholde forgeue the thy gyltes as thou forgeuest hem that haue agylted the. Be wel ware þ thou be not out of charite This holy orysen ame mustyth eke ben pal synne. And therfore it appertenyth specyally to penytence. This prayer must be truely sayd in very feyth. and that men praye to god ordynately. discretely. & deuoutly. Alle way a man shal put his wyl to be subiect to the wyll of god this orison must eke be sayde wyth grete humblenes & fulgure & honestly. & not to the anoyssaūce of ony mā or woman hit muste eke be contynued wyth werkis of charyte. it auayleth eke ayenst the vyces of the soule

For as sayth Saynt Jherome.

By fastyng be sauyd the ꝑyes of the flesshe. and by prayers the ꝑyes off the sowle. After this thou shalt vnderstonde that bodely peyn stant in walyng. For Jhesu Cryst sayth walke ye and praye ye that ye ne entre in to wycked temptacion. ye shal vnderstonde that fastyng standeth in thre thynges. in forberyng of bodely mete and drinke. and in forberyng of worldly Jolyȝes. And in forberyng of dedely synne wyth alle hys myght. And thou shalt vnderstonde that god ordeyned fastyng. ⁊ to fastyng appertayneth four thynges. largenes to poure folke. gladnes in herte spirituel not be angryd ne to be anoyed ne to grutche for he fasteth. And also resonable hour for to ete by mesure ꝑ is to say ꝑ a man shold not ete in vntyme ne syttе the lenger at his table for he fastyth Thne shalt thou vnderstonde that bodely peyn stondyth in disciplyne or techyng by wryting. or by ensaumple. Also in werying of hyer or of stamyn. or of an habergeon on her naked flesshe for Crystis sake. and that suche maner penaunces ne make not thy herte bytter or angryne anoyed of thy self. For better is to cast away thyn heyre than to cast away the swetenes of our lord Jhesu Cryst. And therfore sayth saynt Poule. Clothe you as they that ben chosen of god in herte. Of mysery corde. debonayrte. suffraunce and suche maner of clothyng. In whiche Jhesu Cryste is more apayed than in any heyr or habergeon. Than is disciplyne ekе in knockyng of thy brest in scourging wyth ȝerdis in kmplyng. in tribulacions. in suffryng pacyently wronges ꝑ be do to hym ⁊ ekе in pacyẽt suffring of maladyes. or lesynges. or worldly catel. or wyf. or chylde. or other frendys. Thenne shalt thou vnderstonde whiche thynges destourben penaunce And this is in thre maners that is drede-shame. and wanhope that is desperacion And for to speke of drede. for whiche he weneth he may suffre no penaunce. there ayenst is remedye for to thynke that bodely penaũce is but short atte regarde of helle that is cruel and soo longe that it lasteth wythouten ende. Now ayenst shame that a mã hath to shryue him Shold a man thynke by waye of reson That he hath not be aschamed to doo foule thyng. Certes hym ought not to be aschamed to doo fayr thynges and good thynges And that is confessyons A man shold thynke that god woot alle hys thoughtis and hys werkys and to hym maye nothyng be hyd ne couerd.

Men shold eke remembre hem of the shame that is to come at the day off dome to hym that ben not penytent in this present lyf. For al the creatures in heuene and in erthe and in helle shul see apertly al that they hyden in this world. Now for to speke off hem that ben so neclygent and slowe to shryue hem. it stondeth in two maners. That one is that he hopeth to lyue longe ⁊ for to purchache moche

ryches for his delyte. And thenne wil he shryue hym as he sayth . he may as hym semeth tymely ynow come to shrifte Another is the surquydrye that he hath in Crystes mercy. And ayenst the first he shal thynke þ oure lyf is in no sykernes. And eke that alle the riches of the world is in auẽture and passyng as a shadowe on a wal. As sayth sayntt Gregore that it appertayneth to the grete right wisnesse of god. that neuer shal the peyne stynte of them þ neuer wold withdrawe hem fro synne her thankys but euer cõtynued in synne. For that perpetuel wyl to do synne that. they haue perpetuel peyne. Wanhope is in two maners. The first wanhope is in the mercy of god. That other is that they thynke that they may not longe persewere in goodnes. The first wanhope compth of that he demeth that he hath synned so gretly so ofte. and so longe leyn in synne þ he shal not be saued Certes ayenst that cursyd wanhope he shold thynke that the passyon of Jhesu Cryst is more stronge to vnbynde than synne is to bynde. And ayenst the secon de wanhope he shal thynke þ as ofte as he sayleth. he shal aryse by penytence And though he neuer so longe haue leyn in synne The mercy of Cryst is alway redy to receyue hym to mercy Ayenst that wanhope that he shold not longe persewere in goodnes he shal thynke that the febylnes of the deuyl may no thyng doo but men wol suffre hym. And eke he shal haue strenthe of god and of alle hys chirche and of the protection of aungelys yf hym lyst. Thenne shul men vnderstonde what is the fruyt of penaunce. & after the word of Jhu crist It is endeles blysse of heuene There is no contrarioste of woone greuaunce there alle harmys be past of this present lyf there as is sykernes fro the peynes of helle. there as is the blessyd compaynye that reioysen euermore eueriche of ioyes Joye. there as the body of mã that whylom was foul & derke is more clere than the sonne. there as whylom the body was seke and freel. Febel and mortal Is immortal & soo stronge & soo hool that ther may nothyng empayre it. there as nether is hunger ne thrist ne colde. but euery soule repleneshyd with the syght of the parfyght knowyng of the trinyte. This blessyd regne may man purchace by pouert spyrytuel & the glorye by lowneesse. the plente of Joye by hunger and thrist. And the reste by trauayll. and the lyf by deth and mortyficacõ of synne. To that lyf he vs bryng that bought vs with hys precyous blood Amẽ.





Pl. 13

